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New Statesman

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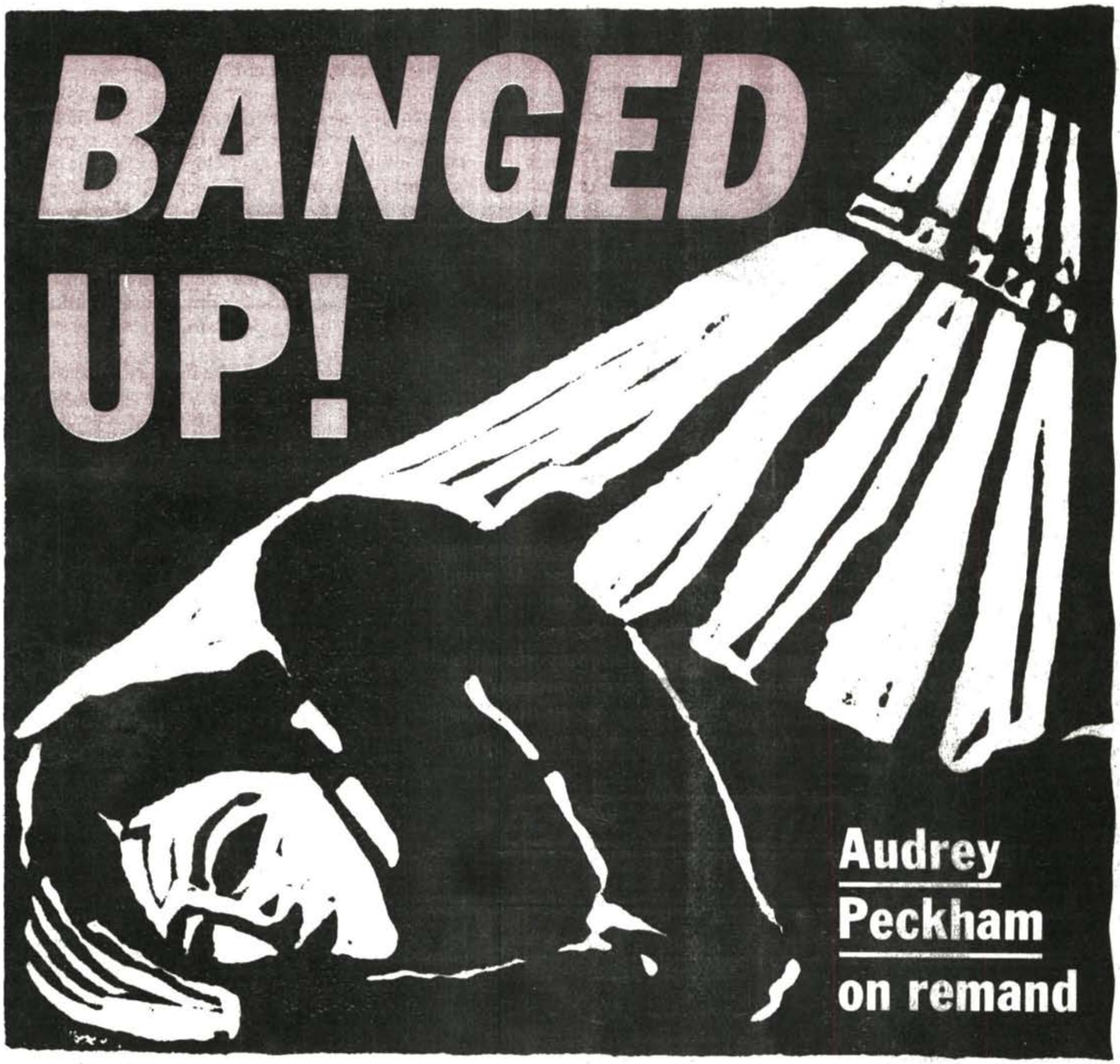

Audrey Peckham on remand

DUNCAN CAMPBELL: Bugs that blew the cops away

ANNA COOTE: So much for a 'women's decade'

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIS: Manhandled

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New Statesman

Cover drawing: Jackie Morris

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New Statesman

Vol 109 No 2831 21 June 1985

Feeble Tebbit rolls over for Japan

WHEN THIS government came to power in 1979 no one predicted the extent to which its policies would lead to the sweeping away of whole swathes of British industry. By now, though in most cases it is too late, even Tories are concerned at the economic and social consequence of what has happened.

So there was no irony, only genuine political relief, from the Tory backbenches this week when Norman Tebbit announced that British Leyland's next major capital investment programme for new models would be courtesy of Honda of Japan. Critical Midlands marginal seats, after all, now hang in the balance.

When BL first did a cooperation deal with Honda, while Michael Edwardes was in charge, the cover story was that it was necessary because BL had not got anything that looked marketable in its development pipeline. But this time things have gone further. Honda is being graciously pleased to allow BL, as it were under sub-contract, to make Honda cars that will be sold as Hondas.

It is somehow fitting that Mr Tebbit, as Industry Minister in a government whose slogan has been that it was putting British industry back on its feet, should be the man to preside over an explicit policy of handling over effective control of the future of the British mass car market to the Japanese. The government has intoned as an article of faith that it was determined to return BL to the private sector as soon as possible. If it achieves its dogmatic aim, it now seems more likely that it will be returned to the Japanese rather than the British private sector.

Even given the undignified position in which its absence of any coherent industrial policy has placed this government, Mr Tebbit does appear to have bid his hand very weakly with the Japanese. The motive for the deal on the Japanese side is perfectly clear. It is Honda's safe way into the huge and prosperous European market at a time when protectionism is once again strongly in the air. No other established European car company would allow itself (or be allowed by its government) to put control of its future development so firmly in Japanese hands.

But for this strategy of industrial entryism to work, Honda cars with Honda badges will have to satisfy existing and future EEC regulations about the proportion of the cars that is actually manufactured in the UK. The British government should have a perfectly effective voice and vote in setting those requirements.

A British Industry Minister was, therefore, in a very strong position to insist on certain conditions being met, before the Honda deal went through. This particularly applies to the question of whether Honda really intends to build a new engine manufacturing plant at Swindon (a town already hit by the government's policy towards British Rail's engineering capacity).

The Minister's statement on Monday sought to give the impression that the engine plant, though not decided, was very likely. Impressions coming from the Honda side, though, made it seem very much as if the form of words agreed between the two sides about the prospect of a Swindon engine plant was a sop to sweeten the Tebbit announcement, rather than a serious part of even a provisional Honda corporate plan.

It is in any case the way of such multinationals to shop around to see where the best fiscal incentives and other douceurs may come

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from. No doubt, if any serious opposition develops within other EEC countries about BL being used as Honda's European stalking horse, sound industrial reasons will be found for offering them a brand new engine manufacturing plant.

Now that, in comparison to Japan, most of British industry has been reduced to quasi-Third World standards, at least the government should try — as developing countries do — to attach sensible preconditions to foreign inward investment. □

Ronnie wields the big mouth again

AS WE GO to press the TWA hijack drama in Beirut continues. But even by this stage President Reagan has shown that he does not understand the point of that celebrated aphorism about American foreign policy, uttered by one of his Republican predecessors, Teddy Roosevelt — 'speak softly and carry a big stick: you will go far'. Using the incident as a reason for holding his first nationally televised news conference for three months, the President was long on threat and bluster, but notably short on describing any effective way in which American power could be brought to bear on the situation, diplomatically or militarily.

Hijacks, like all forms of kidnappings, are volatile affairs, to be handled with delicacy. Yet this particular one seems somehow to be symbolic of the total bankruptcy of current American policy in the Middle East. The Lebanon has effectively been destroyed as a nation state by events since the American-endorsed Israeli invasion of 1982. The Israeli security position in the north is more not less precarious since then. The Shiites have emerged as a political force and military threat to Israel in a way that was simply not the case before 1982.

And now it is Shiites who have been holding the American and other hostages. American Marines were powerless either to control or help Israel when they put ashore in Lebanon without any clear military or political objectives. The American naval task force steaming up and down the coast of Lebanon is equally powerless in the present situation.

American foreign policy would do well to recognise at last that successive Israeli governments bear a heavy responsibility for creating the context in which this hijacking took place. The Israelis themselves have in the past hijacked or shot down Arab passenger planes and held passengers hostage in order to back demands for the release of Israeli prisoners. The Shiite prisoners who have been held in Israel and whose release is being demanded by the hijackers, were removed from Lebanon in flagrant breach of Geneva conventions.

Yet President Reagan with his need to analyse everything in simplistic terms of good and evil continues to flail about him. For example, the episode has been used to give another twist to the Reagan policy of trying to destabilise the Greek economy and the Papandreou government. On the grounds that the TWA jet was a flight out of Athens, the State Department has formally warned all American citizens not to go to Greece.

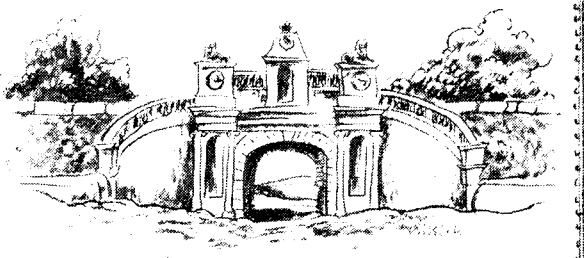
This, just as the tourist season is getting into full swing, is a deliberately savage and quite unjustified blow to an economy which depends heavily on American tourists. The fact is that hijackings can and do happen all over the world. There is no evidence that Greek security is so much worse than average as to justify such a hostile move, or indeed that lax airport security was to blame for what has happened. This increasingly lame duck Administration, it seems, has learned little from its mistakes of the past five years. The President appears motivated primarily by a desire not to suffer as President Carter did from the Tehran hostages, not by any constructive policy for the Middle East. □

On the right lines.

Last autumn, BR made £1 million available to help set up the Railway Heritage Trust.

The Trust is now in operation.

Its objective is to help preserve over 600 listed buildings, 40 sites of scientific interest and properties in 500 conservation areas that BR owns – far more protected property than any other public industry.



They include beautiful old stations, signal boxes, viaducts, water-towers, several ancient monuments and the site of a Roman governor's palace.

The Trust will also encourage public interest in and enjoyment of the railway's past glories.

Video as you travel.

The 'Nightrider' overnight express between Euston and Edinburgh and Glasgow even has a video lounge.

The 42-seater, first-class carriage shows popular feature films at no extra charge.

(In fact, the whole train offers first-class comfort at bargain prices.)

If it catches on, you'll soon see videos on other BR services.

We're getting there.

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HMG PROVIDES CAUSE CELÈBRE FOR GAY WEEK

NOT CONTENT with the 'homosexual spy ring' in Cyprus trial now on at the Old Bailey — and one on which accordingly we can't comment — a show trial of more indisputably direct relevance to Britain's lesbian and gay population opens at the instigation of HMG this Monday 24 June. By a savage irony, it falls smack in the middle of the annual worldwide celebrations of lesbian and gay self-respect. ANDREW LUMSDEN reports

IRONY piled on irony, the minister with departmental responsibility for the new trial on Monday, Barney Hayhoe minister of state at the Treasury, was favoured with a PC (Privy Counsellorship) in last Saturday's Birthday Honours.

The trial (*NS* 10 May) is the 'committal hearing' in the case of Gay's the Word bookshop, whose eight directors and one member of staff face personal fines and possible imprisonment on charges of 'conspiracy to import indecent or obscene literature'. The prosecution has been brought by Customs & Excise, for whom Hayhoe answers in the Commons.

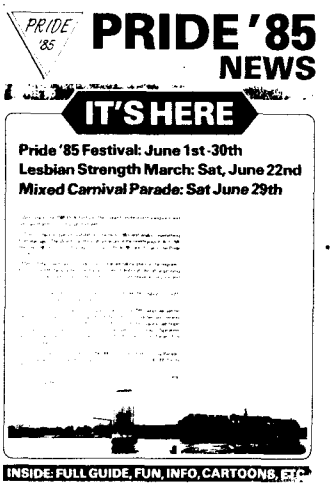
A London courtroom — North London magistrates court, 82 Stoke Newington Rd, N16 — has been specially opened for the committal hearing. Geoffrey Robertson leads for the defence, instructed by Marie Staunton, legal officer of the National Council for Civil Liberties, and Stuart Lawson Rogers leads for Customs & Excise. There'll be no reporting restrictions, at the request of the defence.

Out of a total of 142 different 'titles' (varieties of book or magazine) which have been seized by Customs in the course of its actions against the most prestigious lesbian and gay bookshop this side of America, eight titles are named in the charges. A further 58 are cited as allegedly indecent or obscene.

Five days hard

Next week's proceedings before London magistrates are expected to last a full five days. It isn't known whether the bench will have read all the disputed works by next week's close, or will have to reserve judgment beyond the end of the week. If the bench finds that any or all of the defendants (which include the bookshop itself) have to go to full trial, a lull of up to 18 months will ensue.

The case will then move to a Crown Court, possibly to the Old Bailey. Legal argument is ultimately expected to be particularly intense over just what will constitute admissible evidence by the defence. The prosecution has been brought under provisions which have been unaltered since 1876, and which contrast starkly with the modern revisions made to the Obscene Publications statutes which govern what may be published and therefore distributed *inside* Britain.



Not Hayhoe's reading matter

The two lesbians and seven gay men in the dock on Monday include the *New Statesman*'s London sales representative, John Duncan, aged 25, a long-time director of Gay's the Word who subsequently joined the *NS* staff in 1984. Directors are all unpaid. Leading 'mainstream' writers and publishers have declared their alarm at the case's implications for the whole UK book trade.

Meanwhile, London's share in the European, Australasian, Asian, and South/Central/and North American commemorations of the 'kick-off' event of modern lesbian and gay liberation, the New York Stonewall riots of 27 June 1969, climaxes next week with a carnival parade on Saturday 29 June. Other UK events will be held in Bristol, Cardiff, Newcastle, Southampton and Edinburgh. ●

Black dissent to *Swann* forces conference uproar

A LAVISHLY publicised conference, *Swann — a Black Community Response*, organised by the race relations unit of the London borough of Brent for 29 June, has become the focus of a major row about the implications of that report. Several main participants have withdrawn, and black organisations in the area are planning to picket against it.

'*Swann*' refers to the 5-year government enquiry into 'how the education system should respond to cultural diversity'. Findings were published this year. Its rather complicated conclusions as summarised by Lord Swann, in a guide to the report, didn't mention the word 'racism'.

Shammy Batra, of Brent's race relations unit, and prime organiser of the 29 June conference, believes 'the *Swann Report* is of crucial importance to the black community'. The eruption of protest against the assumptions behind the conference indicates that *Swann*-type multi-culturalism — seen as a doctrine of cultural pluralism implicitly denying a need to *fight* racism — is meeting open confrontation from the black community.

Tensions among speakers

Of three keynote speakers arranged for the 29th, one, Trevor Carter (community liaison officer of ILEA and member of the Swann Committee), says he will attend the conference unless there is a large and representative picket outside, because he wants to 'push the issues and conclusions of the report'.

A second, Bhikhu Parekh, who sat on the Swann Committee for four months before leaving for personal reasons, has declared publicly that 'multicultural education is an education in freedom' whereas 'anti-racist education' is 'propagandist', and 'not an education at all'; a third, Errol Lawrence, is 'uncertain' about attending but would take 'a critical view'.

Meanwhile Usha Sahini, a head teacher from Brent whose name appears in publicity material, claims she was never consulted and is dissociating herself from the conference because 'we have this ridiculous conference foisted upon us with no consultation with the community.'

Among others withdrawing from the conference for similar reasons are Europe Singh, member of the anti-racist strategies team, ILEA, and Rehana Minhas, divisional co-ordinator of multi-ethnic education, ILEA.

Amrit Wilson

Publishers to meet over books to S Africa row

THE SUDDEN new controversy about radical publishers in Britain selling books into South Africa has now resulted in Page One Bookshop organising an informal meeting of radical publishers, to take place in County Hall, London, on 6 July.

The original stimulus came from a dispute between a new organisation, Gays and Lesbians against Apartheid, Imperialism and Racism (GLAIR), and the 5-years old Gay Men's Press (GMP). GLAIR was formed in response to a report on 24 May in Capital Gay *newspaper that GMP had signed a contract with a South African distributor.*

GLAIR argues that selling books in South Africa is a breach of the general anti-apartheid boycott policy. They have picketed a GMP book launch and occupied GMP's offices (NS, *Miscellany, 7 June). David Fernbach, for GMP, justifies the policy of trading into South Africa on the grounds that 'the availability of radical literature from Britain can only help in a small way to undermine the apartheid regime.'*

GMP point out that other radical publishers distribute books in South Africa and make plain that GMP will 'fall into line' with any policy decision by the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) or African National Congress (ANC). Fernbach has questioned GLAIR's 'singling out' of GMP.

A GLAIR representative tells the NS *they aren't 'singling out' GMP but as gays and lesbians they feel they should start within their own community. GLAIR calls the demand for sanctions 'total and without exceptions', and observes that people breaching the cultural boycott have frequently claimed they were seeking to bring 'radical ideas' to South Africa.*

The AAM and ANC both state to the NS *that their objective is a total trade boycott of South Africa. An ANC representative, however, adds that the 'basic issues are arms, oil, Marconi's contracts, these are the things that are killing our people every day.'*

Page One bookshop hope that the July meeting will allow a constructive discussion to take place so that radical publishers can seriously consider whether they should seek to be 'exempted' from the boycott policy.

Terry O'Halloran

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WOMEN PLAN 'SHADOW' SLATE FOR NEC PLACES

THIS TIME next year Labour's women's conference will elect its own five 'members-in-exile' to the Labour Party national executive committee (NEC). GERALDINE HACKETT reports

THE 1986 elections have now been pre-planned as a gesture: an attempt to embarass Labour as a political party that 'lets unions be the power brokers' for the five NEC seats reserved for women.

Under Labour's federal structure — the protest analysis goes — constituency parties elect their representatives to the NEC, as do the trade unions, but when it comes to women's seats, the unions hold sway because they control 90 per cent of voting power at Labour's conference.

(Since only a tiny proportion of union delegates are ever women, attempts by organised women in the party to get the conference to agree to the women's seats being elected by the annual women's conference have been flattened by the same block union votes).

The 1985 women's conference, held at the beginning of this week, heard Audrey Wise, a member of Labour's executive elected in the constituency section, favour 'shadow' elections because they'd 'stir it — unless you stir it, nothing ever happens'.

If the plan irritates Labour leader Neil Kinnock he worked hard not to show it as he sat on the platform through debates on party structure and organisation. Skilful time-tabling by the conference arrangements committee ensured he was there to hear the complaints about how few women are being selected in safe Labour seats. So far, in safe seats where the existing MP isn't standing again, 12 men have been selected, and five women (and one black).

Labour's women's section and women's councils have seen a revival in recent years. Feminists have been drawn into the party, but as yet the impact has only been felt in the transformation of the women's conference. ●

Oslo's next — then India? — for Bookfair

WITH THE DUST scarcely settled from Feminist Book Fortnight '85 (3-15 June in London) plans for successor functions are already being announced for as far forward as 1988 — feminist writing and publishing isn't only flourishing, but seems to have reached a state of perpetual motion.

Next year will see the return of the International Feminists Bookfair proper. Last year's London-based First International Feminist Bookfair was never meant to recur in 1985, so the event just ended was a lower-key but equally successful trade promotion. The 1986 Bookfair will be held in Oslo (21-27 June, 1986) and organised by women in Norwegian publishing.

This summer's Fortnight saw nationwide displays of women's writing in every branch of WH Smith, in Bowes and Bowes, and in public libraries — as well as readings, cabarets and writing workshops. Less centred on the capital than last year, these took place in Belfast, Edinburgh, Manchester, Nottingham, Norwich, and Leeds, cities inspired by what was achieved in 1984.

Other signs of feminist publishing's ever-increasing and international momentum are to be found in this year's 3rd Zimbabwe International Bookfair (the premier fair for books published in Africa) which, from 30 July-3 August, will focus on 'African women and African literature' — and in the strong possibility that the Third International Feminist Bookfair, in 1988, will be hosted by India.

Freelance literary publicist Carol Spedding — thanked by the Norwegians this year for her share in getting the feminist Bookfair idea off the ground

Carol Spedding, one of the original London Bookfair's organisers, will continue to be the Second Bookfair's coordinator and can be contacted on 01-402 8159.

Harriett Gilbert

MISCELLANY

Cautionary tale

If you contact the Arab/British Chamber of Commerce to enquire about the workings of the Arab boycott against Israel, they'll feign no knowledge of the matter at all, and refer you to the Arab League Office in London. In fact, all the boycott paper work is handled by a special section of the ABCC. One of the officials who has worked there regularly is none other than — yes — Ahmed Rajab, the Syrian diplomat who has been in the news over his refusal to vacate the London flat he rented in 1982 for six months. And from which he has now been, so to speak, boycotted.

No, not Shelley Winters

O, weep for Windsor Labour Party! though our tears / Thaw not the Tory frost which binds so dear a . . .' Windsor Labour Party is holding a Shelley celebration this weekend. What better to do in a constituency where the Tories have a majority of 18,203 over the Liberal and Labour lost its deposit? Renée Short, outgoing MP for Wolverhampton NE, will be there, as will Paul Foot, lonely tribune of another lost cause, the Socialist Workers' Party. What was that about Shelley being a Romantic revolutionary? Apply now for a 'Shelley Party', on Saturday night, in Windsor Arts Centre.

Mail supremacists

'The fact is, that if you're not black, gay or lesbian, you are spied on all the time' shouted the *Hate Mail*, beg its pardon *Daily Mail*, on p3 last Saturday, continuing its eccentric version of Islington's action over allegations of racism among employees in the council's own housing department (a rather different account of which was brought to you in the *NS* on 24 May). Do you like stories about the *Mail*'s sturdy correctives to anything taught at schools of journalism? Well, here's one. The *Hate* reported that the female black Islington housing department employee who had the nerve to complain about racist taunts by colleagues, ashtrays emptied on her desk and so on, had no comment to make to *Mail* reporters and even had the audacity to call the police to be rid of them. 'Two squad cars and a van arrived at her home, with lights flashing, within minutes of her 999 call', the *Hate* reports. The fact is, three scribblers doorstepped her for an hour on the Friday night. They refused to give their names, the name of their paper or why they wanted to speak to her. Later that evening another reporter appeared and said he was from the *Mail*. He hammered on the door and shouted so loudly that two neighbours called the police. They arrived in two squad cars. . .

Back in real life

Meanwhile, three Islington housing department employees who were found to have practised racial harassment as charged — by an internal enquiry — have made an unsuccessful appeal to the council to have the finding reversed, and are now expected to seek a judicial review in the High Court. Accidents continue to befall supporters of the black workers — petty but unnerving incidents such as red paint poured over a car and arrows etched in acid on a doorstep (doorsteps again). The same kind of stuff that critics of NF sympathiser Patrick Harrington were subjected to. According to quotes in the Hate, *oh dear there we go again, the* Mail, *the justice inside Islington council is 'akin to something you would expect to find in Nazi Germany or Stalin's Russia'. Expected, surely. And why leave out Botha's South Africa or Pinochet's Chile? Islington says it's considering legal action against the* Mail. *Got it right that time.*

Turn the other cheek

Jan Morris is all very well in her way — indeed extremely well — but an irate US reader, desperately hoping for sane reproaches to American imperialism when European writers get scarce space in the American press, has sent us a cutting from the *New York Times* of 27 May. Jan begins in fine style — 'to foreigners of my political persuasion the United States offers a public image less than beguiling, a gigantic militarist state led by an aged neo-monarch . . .' —

but, ouch, the grovelling ending: 'What need Americans care, out of the majesty of their superpowerness, for the views of a wandering Welsh essayist?' Think tall, Jan. The Americans do.

A leg-up on words

The strongest lobby in response to our open request to readers for what you think about the chaotic terminologies 'chair', 'chairperson', 'chairman' etc (Legless on Furniturism NS *31 May and Letters 7 June) undoubtedly came from Scotland. As one voice, 'why don't you sassenachs change over to our Scots use of* convenor?' *they cried. One reader furiously called the whole thing 'drawing-room dilettantism'.* Islander, *the* NS *Diarist, proffers 'chairmate', which seems to have just the right ultra-democratic overtones, plus a distant hopeful echo of 'checkmate'. And a woman reader, asking for 'chairperson' (though equal numbers plead against it) suggests a 'wild alternative': use chairwoman and never chairman and 'wait for the cries of imbalance from men'.*

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CAUGHT BY THE THROAT — GREAT CITIES SQUARE UP TO THATCHER

1. LIVERPOOL

ALL BUT FIVE of Liverpool's 54 Labour councillors are apparently heading straight for personal bankruptcy and disqualification from office following a vote last Friday (14 June).

The Labour-controlled and Militant dominated council voted by 49 to 42 to set a 9 per cent rate increase but to spend £265 million (1985-86). Allowing for £88 million of 'penalty claw-backs' which will be imposed under Thatcher's sanctions against councils which exceed spending targets imposed by central government, the city's revenue shortfall will be £117 million.

Cllr Tony Byrne, the controlling Labour group's financial whiz, claims that with the exception of five 'defector' councillors Labour didn't even try to balance the books — because it would be impossible without sacking 5,000 council workers (*or, in the absence of central government assistance, raising the rates astronomically*).

Earlier 'splits'

The solidarity of 49 Liverpool Labour councillors, and of the district Labour party vote which approved Friday's tactic before hand, followed differences earlier in the week when it originally appeared that the favoured option was a 20 per cent rate increase in a 'fudge' budget which would have hovered just over the boundaries of effective legal challenge.

John Smith/IFL

John Hamilton — about to see the colour of the writs

As the week went on, the trade union shop stewards, tired of marching up the hill and then down again, insisted on 9 per cent, rather than postponing the issue. In fact there'd already been union suspicion that some councillors were reneging on Labour's 1983 election manifesto by attempting to require productivity deals in exchange for implementing commitments to minimum wages and shorter hours.

Following that row, shop stewards were determined to hold councillors to every jot and title of the manifesto — which also excluded 'massive rate rises'.

Pirouettes

There was a day or two of 'After *you* Sir' as Labour councillors and unions pirouetted around each other about who in Liverpool went over the top first. Instead of, as councillors hoped, calling for all out strike action by city employees from this Monday, shop stewards agreed to go back to their members to get a mandate for an indefinite stoppage *when* the law moves against the councillors — clearly requiring that councillors show the colour of their writs first.

There's little doubt that the writs will be there. The 49 have now put themselves in a position of almost certain surcharge.

On the union side, despite reservations from some, enough of the workforce is ready to take action which would cause serious disruption of the city. Liquidity problems engendered in financial institutions by the suspicion of illegality may bite even earlier.

Popular sympathy

Despite a serious loss of support for Labour in recent by-elections, personal legal action against councillors resisting Conservative legislation will probably provoke a backlash of sympathy from a public which after some recent events may occasionally be dubious of Labour's credentials — but has absolutely no doubt where it stands about Margaret Thatcher.

Liberal hopes of winning control in by-elections following disqualification are ill-founded.

One ironic side-effect of the legal entanglements confronting Liverpool's Labour councillors could be to remove Militant councillor Tony Mulhearn's reselection threat to Robert Kilroy-Silk, Labour MP for Ormskirk, — not to mention potentially disqualifying Derek Hatton, deputy leader of Liverpool, from whichever seat *he* is considering challenging.

Nevertheless, it would be playing straight into Militant's hands if the national Labour leadership doesn't give full support to Liverpool, where most of the party and unions, including some of Militant's strongest opponents, are united on this issue.

Impoverished Liverpool has nothing to lose from the battle. Leader John Hamilton points out that the £400 million annual dole payments in the area amount to £30 million more than the combined budgets of Liverpool, Merseyside county and the Development Corporation. Mrs Thatcher in comments last week depicted Liverpool as a 'civic Hari Kiri case', but even her well-known love for the martial virtues may baulk at 49 kamikaze Councillors.

Ian Williams

2. EDINBURGH

AND MEANWHILE, Labour-controlled Edinburgh district council has now entered the final phase of its own long-running battle with the government over spending cuts. Under attack from virtually all the weapons in Scottish Secretary George Younger's recently-acquired legislative armoury, the city's 34 Labour councillors are fast heading for uncharted territory.

Younger's attack is on three main fronts:

- he's demanding a £5.6 million cut in the housing budget;
- a £16 million cut in spending on other services;
- and threatening to clawback all that remains of this year's rate support grant — some £7 million.

Younger is preparing to take action on all three fronts within the next few weeks. Labour councillors, harking back to George Lansbury in 1921 and Clay Cross in the 1970s, are saying they're prepared for disqualification and surcharges. Behind the rhetoric, both sides are playing quite a sophisticated game of political brinkmanship (they are mostly men).

Labour's refusal to cut its housing budget will be referred to the Court of Session, Scotland's senior court. When faced with a court order, the Labour group could decide to comply and save its housing programme by some 'creative accounting'. (*NS* 10 May). This would avoid the risk of a public split over illegality — the syndrome that afflicted the Greater London Council recently and Lothian regional council in 1981.

After Younger's insistance on cutting spending on other services has been rubber-stamped by Parliament, Edinburgh's rate will be forcibly reduced by 5.2p in the pound. Labour councillors reckon that they could then carry on implementing their spending plans until the end of the year when they would begin to run out of money. If in addition Younger carries out his threat to stop the council's weekly rate support grant cheque, the crunch could be brought forward to November.

Assets to go?

What would happen then is very hard to predict, as the situation would be unprecedented. Labour leader Alex Wood has said that if Labour councillors are disqualified, there are another 34 candidates ready and willing to fight elections and take their place. He has also threatened to sell off 'useless assets' and to default on loans rather than destroy any jobs.

Submitting to Younger's dictat is regarded as unthinkable, not least because it would mean accepting precisely the same level of spending suggested earlier in the year by the minority Conservative group. It could result in the closure of two swimming pools, two libraries and a substantial increase in charges.

Labour's stand has provoked a major row within the Scottish National Party (SNP) over the behaviour of one of its Edinburgh councillors. Boasts by councillor Norman Irons that he has co-ordinated the opposition to Labour on the council have infuriated senior SNP left wingers who support the Labour group's defiance of central government.

Stirling too. . .

Meanwhile the other major local government confrontation in Scotland — between Labour-controlled Stirling district council and Younger — has nearly petered out. Reluctantly following the instructions of his district party, Stirling's Labour leader Michael Connarty last week persuaded the council to submit to Younger by increasing council house rent by £2.27 a week.

A further demand by Younger for Stirling to cut its rate by 3p in the pound is to be fought in court. The council has a firm legal opinion that Younger is using the wrong section of the relevant legislation and thus acting outside his powers.

Rob Edwards

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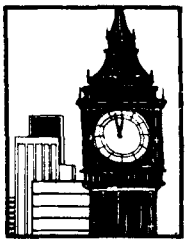

PETER KELLNER

If the news is so good, why isn't Labour doing better?

LARRY WHITTY has started work as Labour's new general secretary at a rollicking pace. In one sense the *NS* has cause to regret the fact. For the past two or three years we have been fed a series of stories about the horrors of life at the party's Walworth Road headquarters. A ritual developed. We would print an article reporting (say) how the party had bought the wrong kind of spon-doogle, that nobody knew how to use it, that nobody would touch it until an inter-union demarcation dispute had been settled, and that when finally someone switched on the machine it blew up.

Whereupon a stiff letter would arrive from Jim Mortimer saying we had got it all wrong. We would print the letter. On the following Monday the postman delivering mail to 14 Farringdon Lane would break his back carrying a sackful of correspondence saying that if we were wrong, Mortimer was even wronger, and that the true situation was far worse than either of us had described.

Such balmy days — for journalism if not for socialism — may now be over. Mortimer has gone. And, let it be said, with no personal ill-will. Mortimer's judgment and leadership were often criticised, but never his integrity, commitment or sense of personal loyalty to his staff. The problem, as one of Neil Kinnock's closest associates once described it to me, was that Mortimer was a nice man — and Walworth Road needed to be run by 'a bastard'.

Whitty has made a good start demonstrating that he is the bastard for the job. He has proposed a completely new structure for running Walworth Road, and he has ensured the support of a majority on the national executive for implementing his ideas. His report to next week's executive pulls no punches. According to the summary published in last week's *Labour Weekly*:

> Organisation seems preoccupied with policing the party and servicing the constitutional bodies of the party, rather than recruiting, organising and servicing the membership. The organisation of elections is less efficient, less adventurous, less flexible than our opponents . . .
>
> Policy output is too complex, and needs simplifying, even for internal party use . . . There is inadequate attention to day-to-day events . . . Campaigning activity, material and presentation often appear unprofessional. Delivery, distribution and sale of party material is inefficient.

And so on — like a resumé of any number of *NS* articles of the sort Mortimer used to dislike. It is, clearly, essential to eradicate the defects Whitty has identified.

But that will not be enough. The malaise at Walworth Road has been a symptom of a greater sickness: the inability of the party to act as if it is serious about winning power. Whitty's reforms can only work if he can also transmit to the staff and to the membership an appetite for power that clearly he and Neil Kinnock both possess.

It remains one of the party's weaknesses that that point even needs making. No other substantial opposition party at any time has ever thought its overriding objective was anything else. One reason why David Owen remains such a serious threat to Labour is that he has the look of a lean and hungry politician of the type that the Liberals on their own have never produced.

Kinnock's depiction of Owen as 'fat on arrogance and drunk on ambition' was wholly accurate; my worry is that ambition and arrogance may be qualities that many voters admire. Ambitious and arrogant people are more likely to get things done than shy and humble ones.

SO LABOUR needs an ambitious leader, a determined general secretary and an efficient organisation. It acquired the first almost two years ago, the second last week and the third — well, let us hope soon. It has also needed a number of other things to go right this year; and on the whole they have:

● The miner's strike ended without angry recriminations. Last autumn it was almost impossible to discuss politics without either a Scargill-supporter muttering about how there would have to be an inquest into Kinnock's behaviour when the strike ended, or a Scargill-critic saying that the moment the strike collapsed it would be time to accuse the miners' president of gross incompetence. Neither has happened — at least, not in the way that was feared. If anything, the Communist Party has been more angrily divided over the failure of the strike than the Labour Party.

● Reselection has gone remarkably smoothly. Scarcely a week passes without a scare story that some able MP risks being deposed — only to be followed a few days later by an account, usually shorter and harder to find than the first story, about how the self-same MP won through. Last week it was Robert Sheldon, MP for Ashton-under-Lyne, and Financial Secretary under Denis Healey during the last Labour government; he survived the process quite comfortably.

Last weekend the first formal casualty of the process was reported: Michael McGuire. But as a former NUM official who backed the working miners during the strike, he was always vulnerable. Some tricky reselections are still to come, notably Peter Shore's. And we have clearly not seen the last pyrotechnics concerning John Silkin or Michael Cocks. But otherwise — no problem. Moreover, the threat from the Militant organisation to bounce safe Labour constituencies with retiring MPs into selecting Militant candidates has wholly evaporated.

● The trade union ballots on political funds have so far gone far better than anyone could have dared to hope. Not only should all the big unions now remain affiliated without much difficulty; some unions, such as ASTMS, which looked until a few weeks ago as if they would have to be written off, might yet produce a majority in favour. Thanks to Tory legislation, the affiliation of unions to the Labour Party will have a legitimacy that, bluntly, neither side has in the past been willing to put to the test.

And yet, and yet . . . With all these things going right, Labour has failed so far to sustain a decisive lead in the opinion polls. During the past six months, the Alliance rather than Labour has been the main beneficiary of the Tory decline. Why?

Conventional wisdom holds that Labour is still paying the price for the defection of the SDP leadership four years ago, and of its own internal battles between 1980 and 1983. Both are true but, I believe, far from the whole truth. Just as the Falklands factor translated into a 'Thatcher factor' — the pervasive impression of a resolute Prime Minister — which carried the Tories through the 1983 election, so Labour's divided image has translated into a pervasive image of a party still ill-equipped to govern.

That impression has to be overcome. This week's MORI poll for the *Mirror* at Brecon and Radnor, showing Labour eight points ahead of the Tories, is clearly encouraging. It gives Labour the chance to campaign on the party's merits, rather than vainly struggling in third place against the threat of tactical voting. My guess is that rubbishing the Liberals won't help — and rubbishing the Tories could be counterproductive. In Portsmouth last year Labour brilliantly exposed the government's plans for ratecapping the city — and promptly helped the SDP to collect the votes of thousands of Tory deserters.

Labour's task at Brecon is to argue that protest is not enough, and that only Labour can deliver the policies people want: on jobs, on hospitals, on pensions and so on. It will not be easy. Knocking by-election campaigns and negative voting are both such well-established phenomena that it may seem perverse to argue for a different style. However, Darlington apart, Labour's by-election record is sufficiently poor for a continuation of past strategies to be challenged. Brecon provides an ideal opportunity to find out if there is a better way of translating disenchantment with the government into positive support for Labour. □

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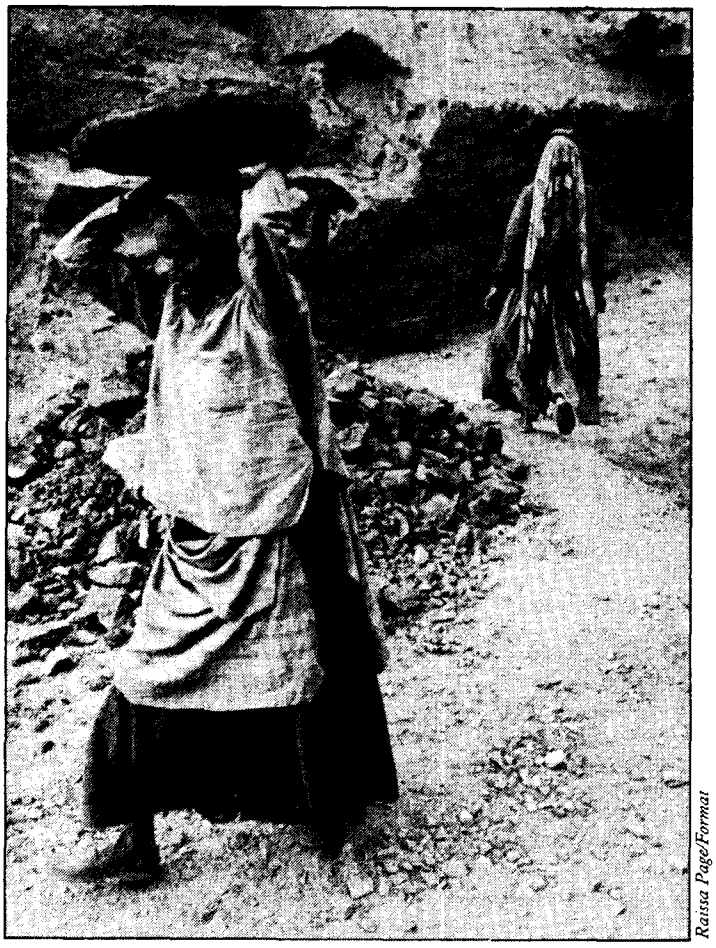
10

THE TEN-YEAR LIE THEY SOLD TO WOMEN



Raissa Page/Format

The UN Decade of Women promised the earth — and delivered next to nothing. ANNA COOTE reports on the success of men's 'passive resistance' to women's liberation, and asserts that 'we shall not see change until we are in control of change'

OF COURSE there will never be a Decade for Men. Women, like children, ethnic minorities, disabled people and refugees, are defined as a sub-group and perceived as a problem, to be treated with aid and welfare. Every year of every decade is the Year of the Man.

But in 1975, the United Nations declared a Decade for Women. Its main objectives were 'Equality, Development, Peace'. It aimed to 'eliminate all obstacles' in the way of women enjoying equal status with men. You name it, we were promised it: equality in the family and society, equal access to education, equal pay for work of equal value, full participation in political decision-making, free choice in marriage and family planning, freedom from physical abuse, full integration in 'development', an equal role in promoting disarmanent and peace. . .

To reach all these goals would require a world-wide social, economic and cultural revolution. In fact, there has been almost no progress towards any of them. Life for many women, especially the poorest, is worse today than it was ten years ago. What went wrong? Did the Decade achieve anything at all?

The UN doesn't declare goals in order to reach them, but to justify its own existence and keep a lid on international tensions. It is a diplomatic forum, not a political catalyst. Its job is to maintain an appearance of consensus, not to change the world. If anyone in power had seriously suspected that the aims of the Decade would be achieved (and had realised the implications), they would never have allowed it to happen.

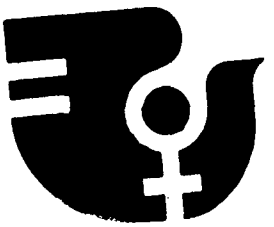
Western feminists who lobbied the United Nations for a Decade for Women probably had quite a realistic view of what it could achieve. US campaigners like Betty Friedan and Bella Abzug, and the National Organization of Women, were constitutionalists who believed in carving out a place for women in major political organisations. They thought the UN was a citadel worth storming and perceived a propaganda value in the kind of hot air it was likely to produce. They saw it as a way of spreading their enthusiasm for women's liberation across the world.

The UN did not consult ordinary women anywhere about strategies for the Decade. Such input as there was from women came inevitably from those who were articulate and well-organised with access to decision-makers. These women had little or no knowledge of the lives of their less privileged sisters.

Nor had they yet learned that feminism had not been invented in the West. Their own politics involved no serious critique of economic relations between rich and poor countries. This fitted in cosily with the UN's own approach: it must sustain a fiction of international co-operation to avoid upsetting its biggest paymasters.

The most obvious thing that was wrong with the UN Decade for Women was that it did nothing to challenge the modern empires of the rich world. It was conducted as though inequality and exploitation existed in a political vacuum, unaffected by the growing power of multinationals, the deepening Third World debt crisis, or escalating military conflict.

Documents prepared for the opening conference in 1975 suggest a sudden, awkward coupling between the ideology of Western feminism and the ideology of international aid and development. Neither understood the experience or needs of most women in the world.



THE DECADE for Women was seen by the UN as an extension of its Development Decades, first launched in 1961 and again in '71 and '81: an opportunity to get women 'integrated' into a process already underway. By implication 'development' was a Good Thing, which *could* take place without women's

A series of three programmes to mark the end of the UN Decade for Women starts on Channel Four at 8pm on Thursday 20 June. This week, 'The Impossible Decade' examines the impact of the Decade on women in different parts of the world. Next week, 27 June, 'The Seeds of Resistance' looks at groups of women organising for change in Bolivia and Zimbabwe. On 4 July, 'Less Equal than Others' is a portrait of four women working at Heathrow airport.

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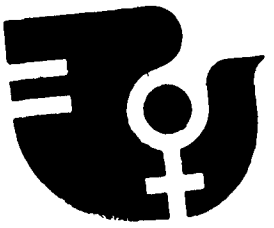
involvement, but was better if women were added in, like seasoning to a stew.

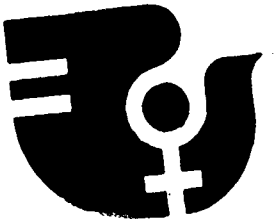
Food production has been a central target of 'development'. In Asia and Africa, women do between two thirds and nine tenths of all the work involved in producing and processing food. In many poor countries, men migrate to cities in search of paid employment and leave women in sole charge — a pattern that has intensified during the Decade. Yet governments and international agencies who control the 'development' process are invariably run by men who (in spite of all the evidence) perceive men as central and women as peripheral. Their efforts by-pass women.

Schemes are introduced to modernise agriculture, with heavy capital investment and new machinery — controlled by men. Who benefits? Companies based in the industrialised West often contract for the work. Governments get aid to pay for it. Local men may get jobs. Women, who form the traditional base of the economy, are at best ignored or disrupted; at worst, they are dispossessed, their means of feeding their families destroyed.

Women cannot be 'integrated' into a process like this. The whole idea of 'development' needs to be dismantled and reconstructed, starting from where women are, and building on their experience. No such thing has happened. Some governments have set up Women's Bureaux, responsible for furthering the aims of the Decade. Most of these have been operating on miniscule budgets, in the shadows of another government department. They tend to run small, marginal 'women's projects' and make no impact at all on the mainstream of the economy.



IN THE industrialised world (where something called 'development' is deemed to have taken place), there has been more emphasis on passing laws for equal pay and opportunity. Yet the gap between men's pay and women's pay has scarcely diminished. In some countries, it has grown wider. In the United States, women in manufacturing still get only 57 per cent of men's annual pay. In the UK, women in non-manual jobs were getting 61 per cent of men's weekly earnings in 1976; by 1983, they were getting only 60 per cent. Without political power, women can achieve nothing. We can neither reconstruct the politics of development, nor force the implementation of laws. Nor can we halt the arms race or prevent outbreaks of war. This is another reason why the Decade has failed: after ten years, women remain outside the political process. Men out-number us in most national legislative bodies by at least 20 to one. Even the UN has failed to put its house in order. The proportion of women in top UN jobs (Director level and above) has risen during the Decade from two to just five per cent.



HOW HAS THE UN responded to the resounding failure of its Decade for Women? At its mid-Decade conference in Copenhagen in 1980, it conscientiously listed a range of obstacles in the way of reaching its goals. Men, it admitted, had not been sufficiently involved in the efforts of the Decade; many countries displayed a lack of political will; too little money had been spent; women had not been provided with necessary services — such as child care, training and access to credit; women's work was still undervalued; there were too few women in positions of power, and poor communication between women and policy-makers. New goals were set for the rest of the Decade, expressing renewed determination to overcome the obstacles.

Further documents have been prepared for the end-of-Decade conference in Nairobi next month. They reveal little change since 1980, and some regression. A draft paper on 'forward-looking strategies' makes some valid points. 'Development should now move to another plane in which women's pivotal role in society is recognised and given its true value' (para 22). 'The sharing of power on equal terms with men must be a major strategy' (para 52). 'It is essential that women support and encourage each other in their initiatives and actions relating to. . .disarmament' (para 242).

But when it comes to 'concrete measures to overcome obstacles', it degenerates into waffle, or into hosts of warring amendments, pending whatever vacuous consensus can be reached at Nairobi. The intention is that strategies for 'Equality, Development and Peace' will be pursued — no doubt with the same gritty determination — until the year 2000.

The Decade has not been without value. It has helped put women on the agenda. It has brought to light information about women's lives that was not widely known before. It has provided opportunities for some women in some countries to investigate problems of 'development'. It has occasioned some projects which have genuinely improved women's lives. It has encouraged governments to pass laws which, even if they don't work, at least create some official endorsement for the principle of equality.

More important, it has enabled women to learn about each other. Western feminists have begun to discover and respect the history, politics and experience of women in other parts of the world.

And the Decade has helped us understand the politics of inaction. Wherever we are in the world, men control the institutions of power. If women are to share control equally with men, fundamental changes must take place: women must be freed of some work commitments, to have time and energy to participate; men must change their own work patterns and give up some of their power; the institutions themselves must change. . .and so forth.

However, men as a political group in charge of these institutions (as distinct from men as well-meaning individuals) lack any will to cede power to women. They have found that the most effective way of resisting pressure for change is to *agree* (as often and as loudly, with as many long-winded policy statements as necessary) that women should have equality — and then sit tight and *do nothing*. Institutional inaction thus preserves the status quo. The UN Decade for Women has provided the most comprehensive and well-documented illustration the world has ever seen of this powerful strategy of *passive resistance* to women's liberation.

We shall not see the changes we want unless we ourselves are in control of change. Better family planning was one of the aims of the Decade, yet poor women in Puerto Rico, who have been sterilised against their will as part of a

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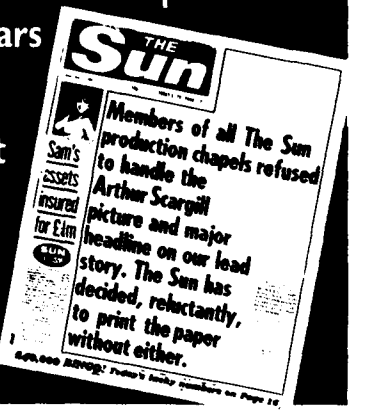
THE Sun
Members of all The Sun production chapels refused to handle the Arthur Scargill picture and major headline on our lead story. The Sun has decided, reluctantly, to print the paper without either.

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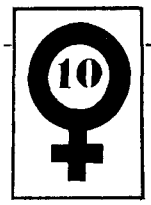
birth control campaign, did not find it a particularly liberating experience. Another aim was to eliminate illiteracy. For Indian women in Guatemala, who are being taught to read and write in Spanish, a literacy campaign becomes a threat to their cultural identity, a means of social control.

By contrast, in Ahmadabad in India, female artisans, vendors and labourers — once the most vulnerable workers in the city — have transformed their political position by setting up their own union, the Self Employed Women's Association. They've started their own bank, which gives them control over their financial affairs, negotiated successfully with employers and city authorities, and reorganised their work on a collective basis. Their initiative is not unique; it is just relatively well-known. There are groups of women in many other countries who have found that they can act together to dictate the terms of change. What *is* unique to this time is that communication between such groups is better than ever before. So we need to organise as women and build up our own power bases throughout the world — not in a spirit of hostile separatism, but in recognition of our own worth, our own knowledge and our passionate desire for a better future for women and men. We can then take action on our own behalf beyond the spheres of male control, and bargain with men in their powerful institutions from a position of real strength. □



'EQUALITY' LAWS

SEX ACTS GIVE WOMEN NO JOY

— but don't blame the (male) pigs in the middle

Another decade 'for women' has passed since laws came in heralding equality at work. The *New Statesman* attacked the conciliation service ACAS in 1981 for obstrucing women using the Acts — as a result COSMO GRAHAM and NORMAN LEWIS were commissioned to investigate. This is their report*

WHEN THE Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts were introduced in the mid-1970s they were hailed as a significant breakthrough for the cause of equal opportunities for women. Ten years on the heady optimism has subsided as it has become clear that the lot of women at work remains an unhappy one.

Discrimination continues to present a serious problem which even the reforms of 1984 — necessitated by a ruling of the European Court of Justice — seem unlikely to assuage. This is because the structures of discrimination are too deeply embedded to be prised apart by mere declarations of faith, however well-motivated.

After a brief flurry of enthusiasm in the early years, the Acts have been relatively little used by women to assert their legal rights. And when women have taken their cases before industrial tribunals success rates have, over the past five years, been running at roughly 11 per cent, while some 38 per cent of applications lodged have been withdrawn without the applicants having obtained any tangible benefit.

The high rate of withdrawals by women has been the cause of considerable concern both with the Equal Opportunities Commission (the EOC was set up in 1975 to help implement the Acts) and elsewhere. In her article in the *New Statesman* four years ago ('The Great Conciliation Fraud', 3 July 1981) Jeanne Gregory seemed to point the finger of suspicion at defects in the operation of the conciliation process. The Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) is charged with seeking to promote the voluntary settlement of claims involving alleged breach of employment rights without recourse to a tribunal.

Ms Gregory (whose information was based on a sample of the applicants themselves) was especially censorious about the operation of the conciliation process in equal pay and sex discrimination cases. She was extremely critical of the performance of ACAS officers, remarking that they were sometimes 'over-zealous' in their concern to prevent cases proceeding to tribunal, often gave inaccurate advice and 'unduly pressured' women to drop their complaints. The burden of her assessment was that they appeared to be biased and unsympathetic.

'The Job Centre hadn't a clue on what I should do to complain.'

AS A RESULT, the EOC commissioned us to examine the position and in particular to seek explanations for the high rate of withdrawals. We had the considerable advantage of access to applicants, their advisers (including of course the EOC), employers and ACAS conciliation officers. In very broad terms we discovered that the operation of the legislation, including the conciliation process, affords even deeper cause for concern than had been previously thought. However, the explanation does not seem to us to relate primarily to the behaviour of conciliation officers who, for all their faults, seem to us to perform a difficult job fairly well. Rather, the reasons are highly complex and deeply embedded in social and employment structures.

For applicants, the process of proving a complaint under the legislation involves handling complicated legal and factual issues over a long period of time. Equal pay and indirect discrimination cases in particular require the collation of time-consuming detail usually only available from employers who are all too often resistant to the very idea of equal opportunity. We discovered evidence that procedures agreed by management and trade unions regularly failed to take account of issues of sex discrimination, for instance in relation to selection for redundancy.

Indeed a culture persists of men's and women's social responsibilities for the young, the old and the infirm, which make intense demands on women while collective agreements between workers and management are typically drawn up with only male workers in mind. Thus social responsibilities place burdens for family caring upon women, which eat into their ability to fulfil their employment conditions which have usually been bargained for by men. In other words, palpable discrimination may take place in the employment arena in circumstances where either only the moral law is infringed or where breaches of the gender legislation may be intensely difficult to assert.

Many women were complaining about not only particular instances of discrimination but also about a culture of job segregation, which in purely legal terms they were powerless to affect. Often they were working for bad employers; employers who were anti-union and who did not comply with even the basic requirements of employment law. We heard stories, for example, of women who were compelled to raise their hands and seek permission to go to the lavatory. Most employers failed to recognise the pressures of women's family commitments and where these conflicted with the demands of the job they were simply brushed aside.

'They initially appeared keen to help but eventually refused to help finance or help me at the tribunal — I was never given a reason for this.'

On the EOC

**The Role of ACAS Conciliation in Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Cases* is published this week by the EOC. The views contained therein are those of the authors.

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'I felt I was a criminal by the way in which I was treated. The tribunal wasn't even interested in what I had to say and I was the only woman in the room.'

SOME OF THE difficulties which women encountered in bringing cases could have been eased by informed, sympathetic advice and yet a quarter of those in our sample received no representation at all. The quality of support received by the remainder was erratic to say the least. Trade union assistance, for example, varied enormously from being extremely helpful to positive obstruction.

As regards the EOC itself the position remains less than ideal. Where the EOC offers its 'deluxe' treatment to women, then the level of support is simply outstanding. Its (largely female) legal division is extremely able and committed and, where full-blooded support is given, then the applicant is in excellent hands. Nevertheless, there remains a large proportion of cases where the Commission has no involvement at all and yet others where it offers some degree of advice without getting heavily involved. Here the position is less than satisfactory and, at least during the period of our research, the way in which letters refusing support were communicated to applicants was a positive factor in a number of cases, often well-grounded, being withdrawn.

The EOC has a general problem of resources — and one which has clearly worsened since we conducted our research. It has relatively few casework officers and no regional structure. For both reasons it cannot afford to make many applicant visits. During the course of the project we spent some time at the regional offices of the Commission for Racial Equality and we were in no doubt that it was able to give far greater support to complainants than the EOC. It has, of course, a larger budget and a smaller clientele.

Nonetheless, one of the central conclusions of our work was that the Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Acts will stand little chance of delivering their promises to aggrieved individuals through the tribunals without grass-roots supportive mechanisms and more

'I was sold a pup and left flat two days before the tribunal hearing.'

On trade union help

widely available resources. A system needs to be devised where women are encouraged to settle their cases voluntarily and informally in the comfort of their own homes, if that is what they clearly wish, but are vigorously supported to pursue the issue to tribunal if that is their preference. Solid support is required because industrial tribunals have become increasingly legalistic, employers more often professionally aided and because applicants are unable to deal with the prospect of witnesses against them whose stories appear a tissue of lies — a common complaint during the course of our interviews.

WHAT THEN do we make of the accusation that the conciliation officers themselves were over-zealous and prejudiced? Well, there is little doubt that many applicants were exceedingly uncomplimentary about them and to this extent Gregory was right. We were told that 'ACAS talked me into a settlement', that 'I was paid off' and so on. On the other hand, we were informed that women would not speak to the officers in case they told the employer 'everything I said'; or that third parties should not be involved in what were essentially private matters. Most frequently, however, the claims amounted to the fact that ACAS officers were not sufficiently supportive, would not back the rightness of a claim, or pointed out the drawbacks of continuing a case to tribunal.

Very simply, the role of ACAS officers seemed to be misunderstood. They are not supposed to take sides or to express a view on the strength of a case. Applicants are looking for support and instead they get ACAS officers who seek to explain the world as it is to women who for the most part have not made that world and do not much like it. ACAS officers are the pigs (usually male, rarely chauvinist) in the middle.

Those involved in conciliation are required to 'prioritise' the immediate interests of the complainant and to bring about a voluntary settlement if desired. This leaves precious little room for the pursuit of principled stands or for the pressing of high-sounding moral objections to the condition of women. The impartiality which is their strength as conciliators is an undoubted weakness if the aim is to highlight issues of principle.

The attitudes of employers faced with claims under the legislation are the most crucial.

Generally, employers cannot afford to settle, let alone concede, equal pay cases. Such cases are costly, with considerable knock-on effects beyond the individual instance. As to allegations of discrimination, employers tend to respond to them in an outraged fashion. The policy and purposes of the legislation mean less to them than the term discrimination itself. 'How can I discriminate when half my workforce is female?' was one typical, if irrelevant, response.

One way or another, then, the instinct is to dig in for a fight and marshal their not inconsiderable resources to wage war by institutional methods with which they are familiar and which leave their opponents all at sea. The wonder is not that women withdraw complaints but that about half of them do not.

'I was a female and X didn't like women working for them.'

The mere context of lodging a complaint in a world of unequal resources and unequal access to information is the clearest single explanation for applicants withdrawing. Their complaints do not have to be lightweight or insignificant for them to recoil from the legal machine they have set in motion. We spoke to women who had found their experience traumatic. Some were moved to tears two years after the event as a result of feeling betrayed, isolated and ultimately degraded.

There are only two responses which we think can begin to make inroads into this sorry state of affairs. First, women alleging discrimination are massively under-resourced and require expert, freely accessible advice at local as well as at national level. Secondly, we believe that since good industrial relations and non-discrimination reinforce themselves then ACAS could do much through its advisory services to encourage compliance with the Code of Practice for the elimination of discrimination in employment recently produced by the EOC. Employers appear to be receptive to advice received from ACAS on advisory visits, yet equal opportunities seem rarely to be part of the package recommended. These improvements, if effected, would represent a real beginning but they would be little more than that. □

Cosmo Graham is Lecturer in the Centre for Criminological and Socio-Legal Studies. Norman Lewis is Professor of Public Law and Director of the Centre.

Take £100 or forget it

At around a quarter to five one Saturday, Ms X, a sales assistant in an electrical appliance firm, was approached by her employer and given two weeks notice because, it was said, the firm wanted to employ a lad in her place to do the heavy lifting.

On Monday, after receiving her notice, she went to the dole office and was handed a form and told to go to her local Citizens' Advice Bureaux. They then advised her to take the case to the tribunal and asked her to fill in a form and give a statement. She was told they would be in touch but heard nothing for two to three months. On ringing they said someone from ACAS would come. She then received a letter from a conciliation officer and a meeting was arranged.

Ms X said the officer was 'very nice' but not very helpful. She was asked to outline her case and then read the employer's statement and comment on it. The employer had claimed that he had dismissed her on grounds of health, which she said was 'bullshit'. The conciliation officer said he would not take sides on the merits of the case and would be back in touch after contacting the employer to see if they would be willing to settle.

After a week the officer rang and told Ms X that the company was offering £100 to settle her claim. He suggested she needed some time to think about it but said that employers nearly always won these cases and that it would be particularly difficult for her as she had no witnesses. On the advice of her mother and father she agreed to accept the offer.

'I felt at the time there was no one that could help me so I withdrew my complaint.'

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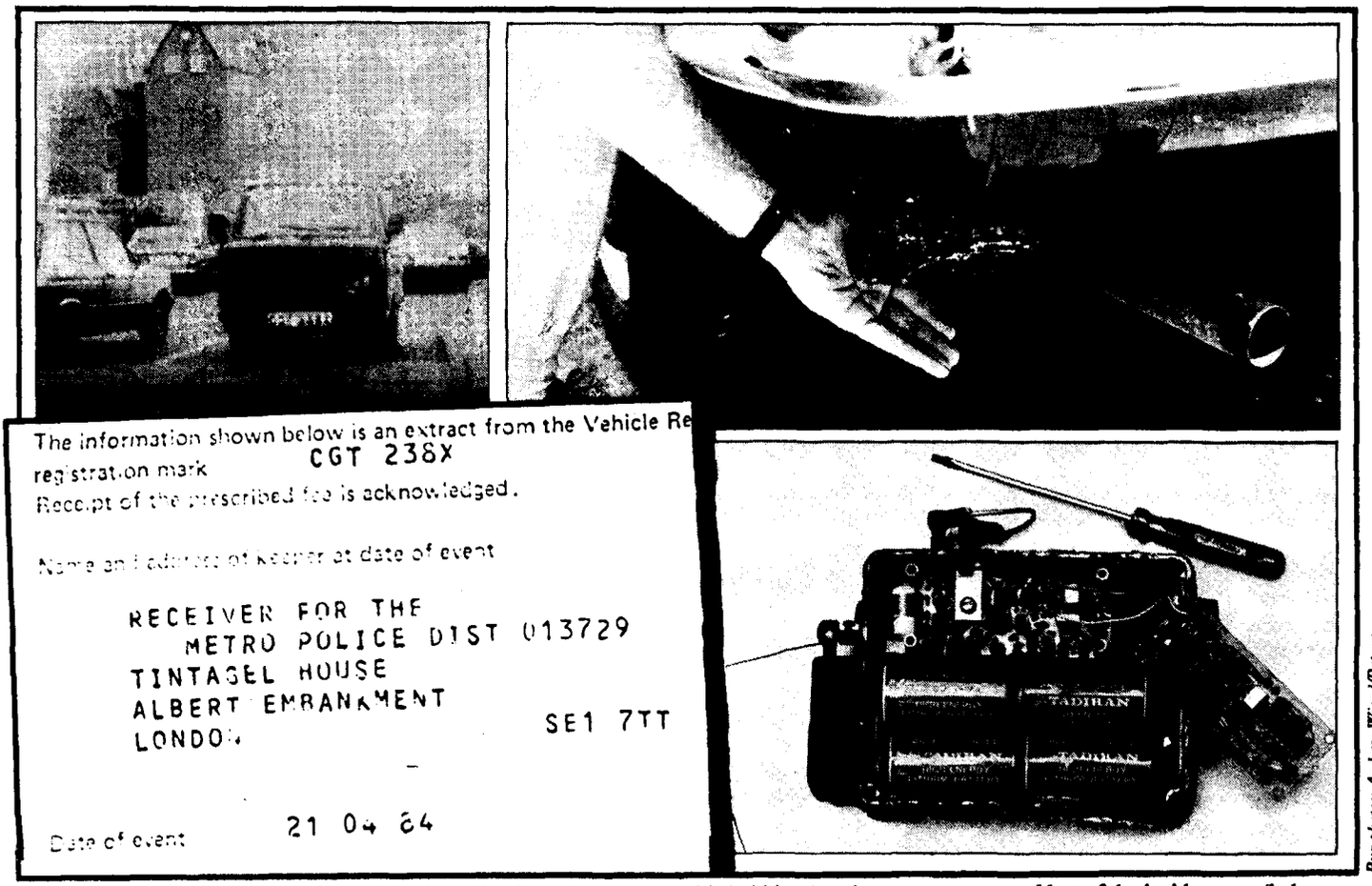
BUGS THAT BLEW THE COPS AWAY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TINTAGEL HOUSE
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Date of event 21 04 84
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Bug photos: Andrew Ward/Report

Government car tracking bug (above right) is easily planted on a car, and is held in place by strong magnets. Most of the inside space (below right) is used for batteries, the rest for sophisticated electronic timing and transmitting circuitry. An unmarked Fiat van (above left) containing the police tracking equipment was spotted by one of the targets last year: we traced the van to the police (below left).

Two incidents have come to light that show a collapse in controls over police surveillance techniques. DUNCAN CAMPBELL reports. *Research: Patrick Forbes*

A SOUTH LONDON BUILDER this week plans to sue the police for wrongful arrest after the dismissal of a case in which he was followed, bugged and then framed on a van robbery charge. Two detectives who had been due to give evidence against Colin King themselves appeared at Bow Street Court this week facing charges of conspiracy to rob and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice. Other officers involved in the King case have been suspended from duty, or are under investigation, for possessing stolen heroin.

King was acquitted of conspiring, in September 1984, to rob a security van. The acquittal came two weeks ago at the Old Bailey, after prosecuting counsel withdrew from the case. Although Scotland Yard was apparently content to proceed, a second, hastily summoned prosecutor quickly noted that 'difficulties may arise . . . [we] have to face the fact that certain officers are charged with serious offences'. The Crown then withdrew all charges.

King claimed in court that the charges had been a 'fit-up', engineered because of his acquaintance with co-defendant Charles Wilson. Last November, the two Flying Squad detectives who had interviewed him were filmed by Granada TV's *World in Action* planning a robbery themselves. Following the programme, Detective Sergeant Kenneth Day and Detective Constable Richard Chapman were suspended from duty and charged.

The police tracking bug was discovered under King's Rover car last September after his exhaust started leaking. It is a sinister looking black painted box, measuring about six by four inches, from which a black aerial wire dangles. There is a switch and an 'alarm' connection. But King did not know what it was and left it in his living room.

He was arrested in Sidcup High Street on 4 October, while driving to the bank with takings from his wife's shop. At first, he thought he was the *victim* of a robbery. An unmarked Cortina suddenly pulled in front of him and armed men leapt out. One pointed a gun at him. As he tried to reverse, a second car cut off his escape. More armed men emerged, surrounding him. It was only after he had been dragged from the car and forced to the ground that the men informed him that they were police officers. Then they handcuffed him.

The police claimed that he and Wilson had possessed shotguns and had planned a security van robbery. But the critical evidence — guns found in a derelict van and a scrap of paper — was, the defence claimed, entirely fabricated; nor did the prosecution choose to present this evidence in court. During the course of the case King discovered that his house and movements had been under surveillance throughout much of last September.

IN A SECOND Old Bailey trial which finished on Wednesday, a West London man, Dick Trump, had also been put under intensive surveillance and had found a police bug under his car. The device was passed to the *New Statesman* for analysis in May 1984, but before we could write about this Trump was accused of armed robbery a month later. At the Old Bailey this week, he was found guilty, and sentenced to life imprisonment — with the judge recommending he serve a minimum of 20 years. Trump claims that, after the robbery took place, the police (who had by then stopped watching him) returned to their observation

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posts and quickly had him 'fitted up' for the crime. Forensic evidence was, he claimed, planted by the police.

Unlike Colin King, Dick Trump *had* been previously involved in crime. And his co-defendant in this week's trial, Alan Byrne, has long been a major police target. In April 1984 Trump went to his solicitor, after experiencing high and obvious levels of police surveillance. Plain clothes officers were regularly hanging around his house, while others set up observation from a nearby high council block.

In the presence of his solicitor Trump photographed a blue Fiat van, which had been following him. It was parked a hundred yeards from his house. No one was visible inside the van, registration number CGT 238 X.

The van sports large and prominent wing mirrors, which probably conceal special directional aerials for a tracking system. We have since traced the ownership of the Fiat van; it is registered to 'the Receiver of the Metropolitan Police'.

A few months later, King later heard about Trump's discovery, and realised that the black box in his living room might be another bug. It was passed to the *New Statesman*.

THE CAR TRACKER sticks to the target vehicle with powerful magnets. It transmits on a frequency of abut 81 MHz — in a band which is controlled by the Home Office and reserved exclusively for police, fire service and the Customs. Inside the bug, movement detectors automatically switch it off to save power if the target vehicle is stationary for more than a quarter of an hour. It then sends pulses once a minute to tell listeners it is still operating.

Using Israeli-made long-life batteries, the bug can operate continuously for between 24 and 48 hours. Inside the tracking vehicle, a concealed display shows the bearing to the target vehicle being followed.

The secret tracking transmitters are made by a small Hampshire firm, Micromill Electronics, which specialises in making equipment solely for intelligence use. Company directors of Micromill, until recently called Datacom Design, refused this week to take calls from the *New Statesman* to discuss their products. Micromill Electronics is based at the Old Flower Mill, Emsworth, Hants. The devices are also sold by a second company, Griffiths Communications, of High Wycombe, Bucks.

We have been given details of conversations Micromill/Datacom held with a private detective agency who wanted to purchase a vehicle tracking system. A salesman explained that their sales were:

> very much in the hands of the Home Office. We have to get approval before we can even mention equipment like that, or describe it. All our products attract this difficulty. We have always dealt with a 'sheltered' market and not gone out into the public market.

But he acknowledged that the company produced the tracking system. Complete with spares and receiving equipment for the surveillance van, it would cost about £4,500, he said.

THE WAY IN WHICH CHARGES were bought against both King and Trump highlights the dangers of the new police technique of intensively 'targeting' people they believe to be involved in crime. Both men were arrested and accused *after* they had found the bugs. The similarity of the two cases demonstrates also that the police fail to distinguish between targets with current involvement in crime and those either with a past background in crime, or those against whom no such allegation could have stood up to scrutiny.

Ironically, government rules on police electronic surveillance have recently been made laxer. Announcing what he chose to call 'more detailed and rigorous' procedures, Home Secretary Leon Brittain last December published new 'guidelnes on the use of equipment in police surveillance operations'.

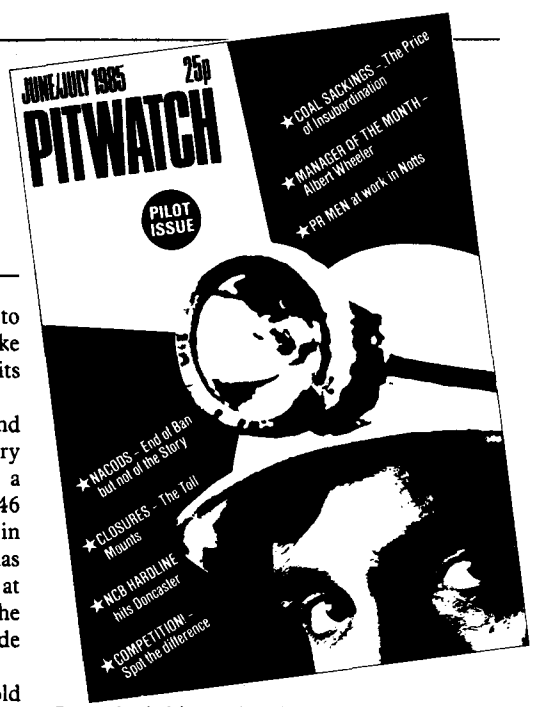
Previous guidelines, issued in 1977, had said that 'the covert use . . . of transmitting equipment (including tracking devices) requires the authority of the chief officer ... this authority should not be delegated'. Now, only a Chief Superintendent, not a Chief Constable or Commissioner, need approve such operations.

The Home Office rules for such cases is being challenged this week by Labour MP Harry Cohen, who has asked the Home Secretary to investigate by whom and why the buggings of King and Trump were authorised. He has also asked the Home Secretary to collate and publish figures on current use of bugs by the police. □

VICTIMISATION

'TAKE NO PRISONERS'

The media may have forgotten, but only four months ago the miners were still on strike. For 671 men, reports JOHN ROSE, there is unfinished business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★MANAGER OF THE MONTH - Albert Wheeler
★PR MEN at work in Notts
★NACODS - End of Ban but not of the Story
★CLOSURES - The Toll
Mounts
★NCB HARDLINE hits Doncaster
★COMPETITION - Spot the difference

Launched this week, *Pitwatch*, a new support bulletin, will keep an eye on the NCB

THE NATIONAL COAL Board's refusal to reinstate men sacked during the miners' strike is being used as a warning to all miners that its word is law.

Not one of the 202 sacked miners in Scotland has been reinstated. At Monktonhall Colliery 87 per cent of the workforce have signed a petition calling for reinstatement of their 46 sacked colleagues, the highest total at any pit in Britain. A similar petition at Bilston Glen has collected 1,200 names. Union representatives at Monktonhall have been threatened with the sack for collecting for victimised miners inside the pit.

Mick McGahey, Scots miners' leader, told the Scottish Area conference of the NUM that the unjust sacking of the miners should go before the European Court of Human Rights in Strasburg. He said he would delay his retirement by two years because of the plight of the sacked men. The conference supported a call for a demonstration in Glasgow on 29 June to keep the issue in the public eye.

There are 160 sacked miners in Yorkshire, and at the Yorkshire miners' gala last Saturday, all the main speakers, Arthur Scargill, Tony Benn, Rodney Bickerstaffe of the public employees' union NUPE and Jack Taylor, leader of the Yorkshire Area NUM, referred to the sacked men.

'We've got to keep faith with these lads,' said Jack Taylor, who has been the butt of some criticism for not doing enough for them. (There was a renewed strike at South Kirkby when four more miners were sacked for alleged 'gross industrial misconduct' — saying 'scab'. The Yorkshire Area leadership persuaded the men to return to work on the grounds that negotiation was the only way to win reinstatement. But there is a strong feeling in Yorkshire, as in Scotland, that the NCB no longer takes negotiation seriously.)

Some of the sacked miners marched to the gala as a contingent: men like Ray Morris, treasurer of the South Yorkshire winders branch, sacked summarily for allegedly shouting 'scab' during the strike, (*NS* 12 April). Ray described how the sacked men are trying to maintain their morale: 'We try and meet regularly and keep in touch with everyone. But the process of trying to get our jobs back seems painfully slow.'

Some sacked miners are marching from Scotland to London to make their case and they arrived at the Yorkshire gala last Saturday. And this week, former activists from the support groups launched *Pitwatch**, an eight-page journal which will attempt to monitor NCB policy in the pits.

MEANWHILE, the NCB defended its hard line on the sackings at the House of Commons

*available from 9 Poland Street, London W1.

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Employment Select Committee last month. Its public posture has been that only those miners convicted of 'violence' would forfeit any chance of reinstatement, but it has become clear that a far wider brief has been operating to keep out the sacked men.

A directive from NCB headquarters to all the regions, made plain in the memorandum submitted by the Board to the select committee, supports sackings for 'intimidation' — where intimidation can be interpreted to mean calling a strikebreaker a 'scab'. Perhaps more important, the directive supports sackings 'on good evidence available to management' of involvement in alleged offences — irrespective of any court decisions.

This means that hearsay evidence from a strikebreaker to a manager can be sufficient to have a man sacked.

When Labour MP Gordon Brown asked NCB chairman, Ian MacGregor, whether this meant they sacked 'without corroborated evidence', the chairman replied: 'If we have evidence ourselves, Mr Brown and we are adequately assured of the facts.'

Ian MacGregor and Kevin Hunt, head of the NCB's Industrial Relations department, had earlier defended their refusal to discuss the sackings with the union on the grounds that normal procedures (union representation and an appeals procedure) did not apply because the dismissals did not arise out of a work situation. This argument was also used for the post-strike period because fresh dismissals were still 'strike-related'.

Even Tory MP John Gorst described this as 'a process in which there was no defence possible, it was summary treatment.' To which Hunt replied: 'Indeed.'

At this point MacGregor jumped in to say that there was an 'industrial tribunal "net" behind each individual'. However, pressed on whether he would be bound by an industrial tribunal decision, he replied that the decision must be made at local level, 'that local management has to determine whether a man is compatible with the work situation in that pit'.

This 'tails we win, heads you lose' attitude has so infuriated at least one Area NUM, Northumberland, that its President, Dennis Murphy, is recommending his 17 sacked members not to bother with the tribunals at all.

But the spirit of the miners is by no means broken, as anyone who was at the Yorkshire gala last Saturday will testify. And the miners' traditional wit is in pretty good shape too. At the Kellingley pit miners are banned from calling strike breakers 'scabs', so they've taken to calling them 'Henrys'. This comes from Henry Wakefield, the strikebreaker on *Coronation Street*. Even Ian MacGregor will be hard pressed to sack a man for calling a strike-breaker 'Henry'. □

Thatcher's 2nd XI — No 5: Lord Belstead

UPP

THEIR LORDSHIPS have this Royal Ascot week to live up to Ken Livingstone's unspoken motto: 'Praise the Lords and Pass the Ammunition'. Until recently, 'Red Ken' has been heartening his hard pressed troops by saying that the Lords, with their less disciplinable and predictable makeup, might make possible the saving of a mini-GLC at least. But the thin blue line of Tory peers has only buckled on four minor occasions. This week is the last remaining chance to save a vestige of the GLC and the metropolitan councils. Lords Leader Viscount Whitelaw and his Chief Whip, Lord 'Bertie' Denham, have had to go ahead with the Report stage of the Abolition Bill even while Royal Ascot has been seducing Tory peers from their place of work.

Even among the political cognoscenti, it is difficult to find many who know that Viscount Whitelaw's No 2, as Deputy Leader in the Lords, is 52-year-old John Julian Ganzoni, 2nd Baron Belstead. He is not underrated, though, by his Labour opponents. When it was disclosed some four weeks ago that he would be brought in from Agriculture, where he is Minister of State, to handle Nicholas Ridley's Bill to dismantle public bus networks, this was taken as a measure of the seriousness with which the government takes the need to get the Transport Bill through by the end of October.

He demonstrated his skill last week by the way he handled the Second Reading of the Transport Bill, showing an exquisite courtesy which contrasted with the Bill's abrasive progenitor Nicholas Ridley. This skill has enabled him to get through such contentious legislation as the Nationality Bill and the Food and Environment Protection Bill without attracting the publicity aroused by a Tory hatchetman like Lord ('Springheel Jack') Boyd-Carpenter.

Although a product of Eton and Christ Church, Oxford, Lord Belstead might have made more of an impact had he, like Lord Forte, retained his original Italian surname. But his father had been elevated to the peerage by Neville Chamberlain in 1938, after 22 years as MP for Ipswich, which included surviving the 1935 general election.

In that election, under the shadow of Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia, Sir John Ganzoni — who had been knighted by Lloyd George in 1921 and baronetted in 1929 — wrapped himself in so many flags that he became known as 'Union Jack Ganzoni'. He was elevated partly for his service to MPs' salivary glands — although a barrister by trade, he was a gourmet who had served for five years as an effective Chairman of the MPs' Kitchen Committee, so much so that the Members' Dining Room was known as 'Chez Ganzoni'.

Although long known as an indefatigable ministerial workhorse, the 2nd Baron did not show his enthusiasm immediately on his father's death in 1958. A history master at Selwyn House, an East Sussex prep school, he went on teaching there until 1960, when he used his inheritance to buy a 650-acre farm near Woodbridge in Suffolk, where he raises cereals and sugarbeet and has a small single-suckler herd.

It was 1964 before he made his maiden speech in the Lords, on education. On the recommendation of Lord Carrington, he became the peer in Mrs Thatcher's first Ministerial team at the Department of Education in June 1970. He left three years later to do the same job as Under Secretary in Northern Ireland. His end of term report card at Education read: 'It is doubtful if anyone at the DES has ever been more genuinely interested in the nitty-gritty of education'. He retained this reputation of being a good listener and conscientious workhorse in Ulster. When the February 1974 general election was called, he was left in charge of the shop while Francis Pym and others went off to fight to retain their seats.

Lord Belstead's name remained unknown, although when the Tories lost that election he became their spokesman in the Lords on Education, Industry, Trade, Consumers' Affairs and Northen Ireland. This opportunity was partly because he was normally a careful and orthodox mainstream Tory. Even his most vivid attacks, aimed at Labour's ending of the direct grant school system in November 1975, did not get reported.

His capacity for ministerial work was again put to the test in May 1979 when he was named Home Office Under Secretary, answering in the Lords for the wide range of questions replied to in the Commons by Willie Whitelaw and three other ministers. He earned the reputation of having 'safe hands' but made less of an impact on the Home Office than his successor, Lord Elton.

His change of life came in April 1982 when he was drafted into the Foreign Office as Minister of State to make up for the post-Falklands invasion resignations. There he only blotted his copybook once: on a trip to Turkey to mend fences over Cyprus, he referred to Istanbul by its old name of Constantinople, which the *Turkish Daily News* found an 'unforgivable faux pas'.

It is precisely because he has made so few such memorable slips of the tongue that the government has put him in the firing line to defend a Transport Bill, which most Conservative experts in the field fear will eradicate a third of public transport. One should not forget that he owes his newfound prominence not only to his own hard work and caution but mainly to the fact that his father found favour with Neville Chamberlain and with his equally appeasement-minded Chief Whip — when they were also busy selling Czechoslovakia down the Oder River to the Nazis.

Andrew Roth

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EDUCATION

JAMAICAN ANGER AT 'COLONIALISM'

Can such things be? London's left-wing controlled ILEA responsible for black teachers who have to live on £3,686 a year? BARRY HUGILL reports

EACH YEAR a small number of teachers from Jamaica teach a full timetable in London schools — schools with a considerable number of black pupils. They help the schools to develop a curriculum in tune with the Inner London Education Authority's much publicised anti-racist policy, they advise on teaching materials, they bring pupils and teachers up to date on developments, political, social, cultural, in the Caribbean. All in all they have been a great asset to London's schools since ILEA began the exchange scheme in 1978.

In return they receive a supplement to their salaries from ILEA of £2,666 per annum. Salaries proper are paid by the Jamaican government. Unfortunately the pay of Jamaican teachers is exceedingly low and to make matters much worse a series of financial crises has led to the government imposing draconian exchange controls. No Jamaican citizen living abroad can take more than £110 per month out of the country. Thus ILEA's Jamaican teachers can earn no more than £3,686 in total for their year in London.

Some earn less because their home salaries are less than £110 per month. Many have family commitments in Jamaica, and are unable to bring all of the £110 to Britain. One teacher has not received a penny of her salary since March. She has lived on her ILEA allowance of £222 per month.

The situation is one of acute embarrassment to the Jamaicans. They are angry at the poverty they are forced to endure but reluctant to protest because they feel that they are 'guests' in Britain. They suffered terribly during the winter months when most found that they did not have adequate clothing. They were shocked at the cost of heating a room in London in February.

Senior officials at ILEA are in a quandary. They are not responsible for the financial arrangements, which are the preserve of the League for the Exchange of Commonwealth Teachers, patron HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother. The League makes the initial arrangement with the Ministry of Education in Jamaica and pays the travel costs of the teachers. But can ILEA absolve itself from moral responsibility for the plight of the Jamaicans working in *its* schools? That's the quandary.

Publicly the officials concerned — Bev Woodroffe, senior inspector for multi-ethnic education, and Joan Goody, adviser for multi-ethnic education — say that ILEA is conscious of the problems and has done all it can to help. In fact they have lobbied at County Hall for more dramatic action including the possibility of 'creative accounting' to allow the teachers to receive money siphoned off from other budgets. They have failed.

I spoke to a teacher who came over on the scheme last year and who has stayed on having got a job with a 'proper' wage. She is now arguing with ILEA that the scheme should be discontinued until the teachers can be guaranteed a realistic salary.

> In many ways we are used as cheap labour because salaries at home are so low and the cost of living in England so high. Maybe it was my fault but I had no idea how expensive everything would be. There is no system in Jamaica whereby the teachers returning meet those who are going to explain what it is really like.

The teachers have complaints about ILEA but on the whole absolve them from responsibility. They concentrate their criticism on the League for the Exchange of Commonwealth Teachers. Earlier this year they sent it a 'round robin' letter explaining their plight and asking for something to be done. They complain that they were not told about the high cost of living in London. And they are bitter that the various social and cultural events organised by the League, 'to present the British way of life to us', are geared to the pockets of the more affluent Australian, New Zealand and Canadian teachers with whom the League is more used to working. A weekend induction course arranged last year by the League cost about £50.

For every Jamaican teacher who comes to London an English teacher goes to the Caribbean. But the League selects the English teachers months ahead of the Jamaican teachers

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which means that they have more time to prepare and have fewer problems with their timetables when they arrive. Because the Jamaican teachers are not selected until very late in the academic year they cannot be easily slotted into a school's timetable when they arrive in September because timetables are invariably drawn up months before. ILEA can't be blamed for this and does its utmost to ensure that the teachers teach their own specialist subjects. 'The relationship with the League is a colonialist one', says one Jamaican. 'They sort out the white teachers and then come round to us'.

Mrs Patricia Swain, executive secretary of the League, was unwilling to discuss the matter with me. Asked if she had received the 'round robin' she said she was not prepared to be quoted in the context of a 'negative article'. I asked her why she assumed it would be negative and was told: 'It is nothing to do with a journalist. This matter is one between ourselves and the Jamaican teachers all of whom are aware of the position before they come over here. Their salaries are nothing to do with the DES, with ILEA or with you'.

She is absolutely wrong. The DES (Department of Education and Science) is responsible for *all* teachers in England and Wales and say that they are not aware of any special problems facing Jamaican exchange teachers. It is difficult to see how this can be the case but now that they have been informed it will be interesting to see what action, if any, they take.

The Jamaicans want their own government to take a much tougher line with the League, which is funded by the DES. They believe it should demand that if English schools are getting experienced teachers they should pay at least the minimum salary paid to the least experienced English teacher. As one of them put it: 'Our country is making a real sacrifice in letting some of its best teachers come to Britain. In its present financial crisis it can't possibly afford to pay them an English style salary; it's just another example of the West benefiting at the expense of the poorer country.' □

This England

£3 book tokens for entries printed. (On postcards, please.)

□Sarah Ali, one of the nation's most regular savers, has tucked away £2 a week since 1975. It is now worth £1000. He writes his name on the notes and deposits them in post boxes. Says Sheffield's head postmaster 'He is someone with a profound misunderstanding of Post Office savings systems.' — *Sunday Telegraph* (George Moor)

□Mr Palumbo has said that the only way to save at least half of the buildings would be to knock them down and build replicas. — *The Times* (Ashley Jones)

□It is a pity Tom Nolan, the Mayor of Newham, didn't throw his cloak over the puddle for Princess Michael. Such a gallant gesture would have brought a ray of sunshine into all the gloom and doom. — *Daily Mail* (Miss E. Stein)

□The bar at Essex police headquarters made a £15,456 loss last year because so many men were away on duty at the miners' strike, it was revealed yesterday. — *Daily Telegraph* (Nigel Smith)

Not the Nine O'Clock Working Class News

JOHN ELLIS

INNOVATION in television takes two forms: the innovation that allows people to speak who hitherto have been silenced or ignored by broadcasting; and the innovation that seeks to upset the traditional forms and habits of broadcasting.

Traditionally, these have been seen as alternative strategies. The first has been regarded as 'innovation in content'; the second as 'innovation in form'. But the two are not as antagonistic as that: getting excluded people to speak is also an innovation in form, because in many cases, the manner of speaking of the excluded (racial minorities, regional majorities, working people) is markedly different from that normally adopted on television.

Voices are excluded from television *both* because they speak from an uncomfortable reality, *and* because their way of speaking is uncomfortable when seen on television. It does not fit the forms; or, better, the forms do not fit it. So the forms have to be changed.

However, because considerations of form have a longer political perspective to them than the urgent task of 'getting something said on TV', they are often ignored. They are ignored in British TV in particular for another reason. British TV has an inbuilt suspicion of the image, and a transcendent faith in the voice. This British predisposition (no doubt due to the strong literary bias of our intellectual culture) is thrown into sharp relief by the current season of material from the French experimental TV producer INA (Institut national de la communication audiovisuelle), at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London.*

INA is devoted specifically to the functions of archiving, of technological experiment, and of adventurous production. As a separate institution in the French public broadcasting set-up, it has no equivalent in Britain. Its relative autonomy from the constraints of scheduling and the computation of audience statistics was initially taken as a charter to produce any extravaganza that occurred to the febrile imaginations within INA; but more recently a balanced approach has been adopted.

INA produces several programmes and series which are devoted to giving voice to those who have been ignored or excluded from TV in the past; but it combines this work with an adventurous use of form. Often both approaches are combined in the same piece of work, most notably in Godard's series of 1976, *Sur et sous communication*. But even in such cases, a different philosophy of the relationship between sound and image is very evident.

A small but revealing anecdote: when the INA season received its first showing in Britain, at Bristol's Watershed, there was a lively debate with Edgardo Cozarinsky whose archive film *One Man's War* had just been shown. The British audience assumed that a voice speaking over shots of a particular individual were 'meant' to indicate that the voice was the voice of this person. Cozarinsky asserted that no such connection was intended by him; nor, indeed, had any French audience with whom he'd discussed the film made such a connection.

This was a crucial point in the understanding of Cozarinsky's film: no piece of trivial nit-picking. It reveals a surprisingly large difference of understanding between audiences which we assume to be as culturally close as those of Britain and France. In Britain, we consider that the audio leads and the visuals follow; in France this certainty is less well established. In the example from *One Man's War*, the voice of the person was the most important factor for the British, so it was 'naturally' assumed that the image existed as support for the voice. It was not a separate or complementary reality, it was a contributory reality.

In the predominant British Aesthetic, the voice leads and the image follows. Hence those experimental programmes on British TV (predominantly on Channel 4) which emphasise the image, or experiment with the relationship between sound and image, are those which have the most difficult passage. Some of the programmes in the *Visions* series (which I co-produce) have been examples of this; equally the current series *About Time* (C4, Wednesdays 9pm) provides a good example. Composed in part of interviews with people drawn from social groups rarely seen on TV, the series uses images as an autonomous means of carrying information and comment. The programmes have to be heard *and watched*. Their meaning (and their beauty) emerges from the combination of images and voices, rather than from a voice issuing from a mouth images of which are shown as evidence of the source of the voice.

About Time is an elegant example of innovative TV. It asks its viewers to give a different attention from that usually asked for. It also forces us to ask a fundamental question (a perennial one, too): if innovation on TV in Britain is seen only as giving space to excluded voices, does not this procedure tend to legitimise the form of presentation used, and hence to legitimise the predominant voices (Alistair Burnet, Robin Day, Jan Leeming, Terry Wogan)? If a real change in TV's priorities for 'acceptable' voices is to be made, surely the forms in which voices appear must change as well? □

*Wednesdays to Sundays 19-30 June. See also *BFI Dossier 22* 'INA — French for Innovation' edited by Jill Forbes (British Film Institute, £3).

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DIARY

My passion for computers will be familiar enough to readers. I wouldn't be without a wordbox and I'm glad everyone is getting them. Even the *New States*!* has its first machines, while those of my acquaintances who still hold out have lost their old arrogance: it is no longer a matter of praising the quill and eulogising ink. So it may seem strange that I delight in the humiliating demise of Sir Clive Sinclair, whose computer company has been 'saved' by Robert Maxwell. Perhaps Maxwell acted with an eye to the Lords as Thatcher is known to have taken a personal concern in the matter. Having pinned her flag to the growth of new technology, she did not want Sinclair to go bust. But the gimmickry and slick futurism of consumer capitalism has claimed a suitable victim. Behind the breathlessness of the spectrum knight we find... unsold stocks and hot air. The QL was his downfall. It stands for Quantum Leap — backwards it turned out, as pretension reaped its reward.

○

The real issue is 'modernisation', for so long a key rhetorical trope in the fundamental conservatism of British politics. In order to stay the same, the British State has long sought ways of appearing to be up to date. For the elite in this country modernisation is a gimmick, something external that is added on to mask the continuity of the old order.

The reason why I proselytise the wordbox, apart from my delight in irritating backward readers, is that I write with one. Indeed, I cannot understand why anybody today who writes or organises or has a business does not *use* a cheap computer. I emphasise 'use' for they are not toys or consumer items — even if they look like TVs. As I've said before, they are instruments of production which increase personal skills. It is the difference between substance and appearance. Sinclair was into the latter, the face-lift of modernisation — the space game. Doubtless he was one of the people Thatcher had in mind when she said that the problem of employment would be solved by 'princes of industry'. Sinclair's real commitment to the future was to accept a knighthood!

There is a lesson for the Labour Party too, which has always had its modernisation fetish. Wilson gave it a bad name and it is only now that Labour leaders are regaining their nerve about appearing to be up to date. But are they really? (Up to date, that is.) For what was wrong with Wilson was not that he seemed modern, but that he wasn't: that in actual fact he was as dyed in the wool a parliamentary nationalist as anyone else.

○

It is true, however, that Thatcher is a new type of conservative. The other day Francis Khoo told me that to him Britain now feels quite similar to Singapore in 1965. He listed the six conditions for Third World takeoff: a government friendly to multinationals; high unemployment; low wages; fiscal and tax incentives; absence of industrial conflict; good infrastructure. Furthermore, he reckoned that a good infrastructure meant not only open roads, harbours and easy air traffic, but also strong policing.

Viewed in this light, government policy towards the miners can be seen as the start of an epoch. Indeed, a tremendously vindictive campaign is being pressed home in the coalfields (see John Rose, p13). Resistance is fierce but scattered. The media regards the whole thing as 'over', so there are few reports. But a lot is happening and a support bulletin is about to appear to spread the word. It is called *Pitwatch* and I've been asked to say that Labour Party and trade union branches, and miners' support groups, or anyone else who wants to avoid the Singapore solution, can order copies — five for £1 — from Pitwatch, 9 Poland Street, London W1. I was shown a proof of the first issue, which is now at the printers, and it is energetically written and informative.

All the same, I can't hide my feeling of gloom so far as the villages are concerned. I made the mistake of reading Zola's *Germinal* in the aftermath of the strike, with its appalling picture of poverty, sexual violence and despair in the French mines. It was published exactly on hundred years ago.

○

Those who followed Sivanandan's polemic against racial awareness training in the last two issues of the *NS* may not have realised the significance of the acknowledgement to the magazine he edits, *Race and Class*. It has a new address. Personally, I think that there is more to class and race than race and class. But at present I am in Siva's good books so he seeks to baffle me with charm rather than argue the point. At any rate, after 20 years of sacrifice by the staff and with help from the GLC, the Institute of Race Relations has its own building. At the party held to celebrate, we opened champagne on the roof and Wilfred Wood, now England's first black Bishop, and earlier the Institute's first black chairperson, gave the property his blessing.

○

Reporting on magazines and buildings reminds me that Collet's really has moved and the old London bookshop through which every revolutionary *flaneur* trailed during the '60s and '70s is no more. Will the display of *Struggles* and *Vanguards* in the so-called International shop really last? It has an air of impermanence. This is a pity, as it was always valuable to be able to look over the massed dullness of the far Left. I suppose I was one of those who often looked but seldom acquired. But the last, and final, time I went to the old Collet's I noticed among the proletarian this's and the revolutionary that's one *Workers Playtime*, which described itself as 'The revolutionary answer to *The Face*'. As I believe that the only bearable vanguards are those who refuse to take themselves seriously, I bought it. Although it has an address (84b Whitechapel High St, London E1), you can't send a cheque because it has no bank account. Now that is real principle... or is it just honest make-believe?

Islander

ROGER WODDIS

Talk about terror

'It is no good condemning evil loudly unless we are prepared to condemn and contain it physically.' — The Times *on the TWA hijack*

Let us talk about terror, my children,
Let us ponder unspeakable crimes,
While expressing our fear
For the things we hold dear
And inclining an ear to *The Times*.

To be shocked by the sickness of evil
Means adopting a high moral tone
And declaring our *Geist*
In the spirit of Christ,
Though the body is sliced to the bone.

Let us talk of a violent challenge,
Of the need to do more than condemn:
There are rights to restore,
And the vessels off-shore
Are for *us* to make war against *them*.

Namibia? Botswana? Soweto?
What have they got to do with the case?
We are talking of sin,
So why bring them in,
When the threat to our kin needs the space?

Let this be a lesson, my children:
Though terror is terribly wrong,
There's a time when we fake
Any measures we take,
And a season for making a song.

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Camera Press

ANTI-WAR SURGE SHAKES AYATOLLAH

Iraqi air raids are provoking the people of Tehran — cowed by years of repression — to take to the streets again. Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini may regret this week's refusal of a ceasefire with Iraq, reports ABBAS SEAMGAR

THE IRAQI PRESIDENT's proposal last Saturday to halt bombing Iranian cities for two weeks appeared at first to offer a breathing space to Khomeini. The Iranian government had been facing increasing hostility from hitherto loyal citizens, unconvinced by the government's attempts to persuade them that casualties from Iraqi air raids are fewer than from road accidents.

Khomeini's decision to refuse the ceasefire — at the expense of domestic discontent — reflects his wish to maintain the 'blissful war for our nation and for our dearest Islam'. Iraq wanted a total ceasefire while Iran merely wants the war to be kept away from the civilian population.

Another factor in the refusal may have been that it was the left-wing opposition force, the Mujahedin, who negotiated with Iraq — and given their present increasing popularity, the Iranian government would want to prevent them from gaining credit from their diplomatic initiative. Indeed, immediately after Iraq announced it would implement a ceasefire, six Mujahedin members were executed by the Iranian government.

So the people of Tehran and other major cities will continue to leave their houses at night with a couple of blankets to sleep in the safety of the uninhabited city outskirts. The lucky ones who can afford it go to safer places for weeks or even months.

The capital city Tehran, which in 1979 was the epicentre of the revolution, is now beginning to feel the horrors of war. For the first time in nearly five years the people have taken to the streets to demonstrate against the continuation of the war and to press for an early settlement.

Begun in 1980, the war was quickly turned into a vehicle to consolidate the government's power. The regime was not only able to execute numerous opponents, but also had the chance to exploit the nationalist sentiments running high among Iranian youth.

The people's willingness to fight against Iraq, which they saw as the invader, was cunningly publicised by the authorities as a show of support for the policies of the regime, a mandate for the government to 'Islamicise' the country, to shape it according to the Ayatollah's economic and political design.

For a long time it looked as though the 'bliss' of war was going to be everlasting. The army — a potential danger to the survival of the new regime — was kept busy at the war front. Oil production remained largely uninterrupted, bringing enough money into the country to subsidise both the war and the effectively organised rationing system. The war also united all the different political groupings within the regime itself, helping it to take root more firmly.

THE REGIME's success in these fields was attributed to 'God's help for a nation that is intent on implementing His will', as the Ayatollah put it in one of his speeches on Tehran radio. The war was carefully kept well away from the capital Tehran. Iraq, however, did not underestimate the importance of this to the Ayatollah's ability to keep Iran on a war footing.

The Iraqi Air Force — with its total superiority over Iran — first raided civilian targets several weeks ago and began 'the battle of the cities'.

Following its failed attempts to buy air defence systems from international sources, Iran appealed to the United Nations, which it had consistently denounced over the years as an instrument of the superpowers, to mediate a partial ceasefire; that is, an end to the bombing of the cities but not to the war. In practice this means that the government wants to continue the war but keep it well out of Tehran. But this proved to be harder than it had thought.

Despite intensive repression, opposition groups have been active within Iran over the past few years. Last year an organized strike took place in the steel mill in Isfahan. It ended successfully when the government gave in to the workers' demand for higher pay. Last October and November two important demonstrations took place at Amjadieh Sports Stadium. But these remained isolated events until the emergence of an anti-war movement. The first sign of open hostility to the war came on 10 April, soon after the start of the latest round of Iraqi air raids on Tehran, when a sizeable crowd gathered at the scene of an attack in a southern district of the capital and chanted slogans against the war and the regime.

The opposition organisation, the Mujahedin, has claimed that its members were involved in organising the anti-war protests; Tehran radio

Bakhtiar: refusal to work with 'pro-Soviet' Mujahedin divides opposition to the Ayatollah

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announced that in one of these demonstrations 300 of their members were arrested. The Mujahedin argue that they are now a credible organisation with strong ties within Iranian society.

OTHER OPPOSITION groups also claim to be working in the country. Among them is the National Movement of Iranian Resistance (NAMIR), led by the veteran politician Shapour Bakhtiar whose call for a day of action on 17 May was supported by a large number of people, especially in Tehran. The question that many people now ask is whether there is any possibility of NAMIR and Mujahedin finding some common ground.

This has already been rejected out of hand by both organisations. NAMIR's Voice of Iran quotes their leader as saying that they 'cannot work with Massoud Rajavi and other leaders of the Mujahedin'. They criticise the Mujahedin for taking on anti-imperialist stand while being reluctant to fault the Soviet Union, which is 'arguably the most aggressively Imperialist power in the world today'. The Mujahedin, on the other hand, envisage a future system of government that excludes anyone closely associated with either the Shah's or Khomeini's regime. This therefore excludes NAMIR, whose leader Shapour Bakhtiar was the Shah's last prime minister.

Ideological confrontations also centre round two basically different theories about Iranian society. The first, advocated by the Mujahedin, is that Islam has been the established dominant culture in Iran for many centuries, hence the struggle for socialism can only succeed within the context of Islam.

The second argument holds that although Islam is a religion with a long history (1400 years), monarchy is in fact twice as old and is therefore something that people can readily associate with. Advocates of this theory — coming from the centre and the Right — argue that the real issue is not to do away with monarchy but to keep it within the confines of the 1906 Constitution which was supposed to limit the power of the Shah.

Although NAMIR's position on the question of monarchy is not quite clear, they do emphasise that they are not essentially a monarchist organisation. Their aim, as stated in their literature, is to 'establish democracy, concern for human rights and the rule of law'.

Judging from recent events anti-government forces appear to be gaining ground. But so far there is no sign of any dramatic shift of political power, and the Ayatollah still appears to be well in charge.

The opposition forces argue however that the recent demonstrations, generally against the continuing war, are but an occasional outburst of the movements beneath the surface which are preparing for the next general upheaval. Although this sounds like wishful thinking there is a sense in which it could be true. For among all the uncertainties two things are clear: first, that mass movements do occur in Iran; and, second, that they always come as a surprise not just to the ruling regimes but also, as we saw in 1979, to the outside world. □

The Mujahedin's supporters are holding an annual demonstration in London on 20 June, starting from Russell Square at 11 a.m.

DEADLINE 1987: WAR

Camera Press

The Ortega brothers (Nicaragua's Sandinista president Daniel, left, with army chief Humberto): will they know what's hit them?

Last month (*NS* 31 May) CLAUDIA WRIGHT predicted the Democratic Party would be too divided to sustain a campaign against the Administration's policy in Nicaragua. She now predicts what will happen next, following the Administration's victory in the latest round of congressional votes on Nicaragua

THE MANUAL the CIA prepared for its surrogate troops in Nicaragua, the *contras*, is not the simple handbook that semi-literate soldiers are usually given to help them cope in the jungle.

It opens with a quotation from Aristotle, ends with references to Demosthenes, Danton and Hitler. The mid-section quotes approvingly from a leader of the Hukbalahap, the Philippine insurgents of the early 1950s, against whom American counter-insurgency experts got their first taste of guerrilla blood. Indeed, the manual's long section on public speaking might have been intended more for members of the US Congress than for the *contras*. 'Never challenge logic in the mind of the audience', the budding guerrilla orators are advised, 'since immediately the main thing is lost — credibility'.

On 12 June, 26 mostly southern Democrats and 7 mostly northern Republicans in the House of Representatives reversed their 24 April votes and empowered the Administration to resume financing the *contras*. Democratic Party leaders, like the Speaker, Tip O'Neill, and the Whip, Tom Foley, make clear that in their view Congress has now signalled the Administration that it is willing to support a group of insurgents — although no one expects them to achieve the Administration's objectives with 'humanitarian' aid (no one believes it is anything of the sort) of $27 million. The logic of the vote is that the Congress, along with American public opinion, is being softened up for US military intervention in Nicaragua — by 1987 at the latest, according to some Washington estimates.

Technically, the new round of voting was far from the clear-cut mandate the Administration has sought. In order to counter Democratic Party claims that the Administration was preparing for a full-scale war against the Sandinista government — something a White House paper leaked in April clearly showed — President Reagan sent a letter to one of the vacillating Democrats on 11 June, pledging that he 'is determined to pursue political, not military solutions, in Central America'.

The money voted by the House (by 248 to 184) must in theory now be channelled to the *contras* over the next nine months through agencies other than the CIA and the Defense Department.

An amendment intended to extend the current ban on direct CIA assistance to the *contras* beyond September, when it expires, was defeated by 232 to 196. This remains the weakest element in the Administration's new 'mandate'. It will have to be voted on again when the actual bill authorising funds for CIA and other intelligence operations comes up in July or August. The amendment would bar the CIA and Pentagon from providing military aid 'for the purpose of overthrowing the government of Nicaragua or provoking a military exchange between Nicaragua and Honduras'.

Even if the 'weak knees' bloc of Democrats swings back to supporting this in a few weeks, the Administration has already found several ways of getting around it. Ostensibly private American groups are raising money to finance arms purchases for the *contras*. Also, existing US military and CIA funds for such states as South Korea, Israel, Zaire and El Salvador can be easily diverted; weapons with South Korean marking have been identified in Nicaragua as having been carried by the *contras*.

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The Democratic leadership in the House was angry and dejected by the 12 June result. In the Senate, where the Republicans are in the majority, an even larger 'humanitarian' aid proposal was sponsored by the Georgia Democrat, Sam Nunn, and on 6 June it passed 55 to 42 — with 14 Democrats in favour, 32 against.

The most notable Democratic turncoats in the House and Senate, Representative Les Aspin of Wisconsin, the chairman of the House Armed Services Committere, and Senator Jay Rockfeller of West Virginia, have demonstrated such personal opportunism that their votes will do them no good in the long run. But three of the most active contenders for the 1988 nomination for president, Senators Edward Kennedy, Gary Hart and Christopher Dodd, each went public with amendments to prevent the Administration widening the war in Nicaragua.

These included two provisions reasserting the constitutional right of Congress to declare war. They were defeated even though they contained loopholes loose enough to allow the Administration to launch a Grenada-type intervention in 'defence' of US citizens.

It now seems inevitable, as the Sandinista leadership has long believed, that Administration policy is headed for direct US military intervention. The contradictions that have served to win over Democratic votes do not disturb Administration officials, who have flatly told Congress that 'direct application of US military force must realistically be recognised as an eventual option, given our stakes in the region, if other policy alternatives fail'. This month's charade in Congress, the imposition of the trade embargo against Nicaragua, the raising of the *contra* force from roughly 20,000 to about 35,000 and the authorisation of formal CIA intelligence and targeting assistance to the *contras* on the Nicaraguan border represent in sum a strategy *designed to fail.*

WHAT FORM would direct American action then take? American public opinion is still broadly opposed to US support for the *contras*, but a sizeable group — 43 per cent in a poll this month — says it is more worried about a 'communist takeover' in Central America than about war there. To overcome public resistance to a US attack, the Administration may have to create more than one provocation and conduct the attack in stages, opening with 'surgical' air strikes on Nicaraguan airfields and military depots. The key to the Administration's military options is the requirement that the Sandinista government can be liquidated cleanly (in terms of US casualties) and a puppet government of *contras* installed quickly in Managua in its place.

CIA analysts generally agree with publicly discussed scenarios of a US invasion. Not all are agreed with an intelligence assessment, reported in a *New York Times* review of the invasion options, that 'if proper tactics and proper ordnance were applied to those sites (in Managua), they'd never know what hit them'; a US invasion to liquidate the Sandinista government would be 'like falling off a log'.

Estimates of the size of the US force necessary for an invasion range between 100,000 and 125,000; the initial attack leading to the overthrow of the Sandinista government in Managua would cost between 3,000 and 8,000 US troop deaths, about 20,000 in total casualties. No one in Washington has yet gone public with an estimate of the number of Nicaraguan dead. The optimistic scenarios anticipate a dramatic collapse of the Sandinistas, with ground fighting limited to a few strongpoints in Managua and along the Caribbean and Pacific coasts. More cautious assessments suggest that US attackers would take at least two weeks to secure their main military and political objective.

Apart from Congress and American public opinion, can anything halt the inevitability of this attack? Democratic party leaders speak of the isolation of the Reagan Administration among its allies, particularly in Western Europe, on this policy. But the CIA assessment is that neither the Soviet Union nor Cuba would pose a significant threat to a US invasion. Notwithstanding the Administration's public rhetoric, Cuba reportedly has fewer than 800 military specialists among its complement of 3,000 advisers currently in Nicaragua and the US government believes that Fidel Castro has urged the Sandinistas to respond to an invasion by a carefully prepared withdrawal to mountain and jungle sanctuaries.

Washington may be underestimating Moscow and overestimating its own military effectiveness, but nothing short of a military disaster for the US appears likely now to swing Congress against the inevitable. □

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LETTERS

Smelling a RAT

N. L. Fortney, London N7

It is about time someone blew the whistle on Racism Awareness Training (RAT). A. Sivanandan (*NS* 14 June) has given us a sorely needed framework within which to situate RAT attitudes and to forge effective anti-racist activity.

But the piece is timely for another reason. Anyone who reads any of the tabloids, or certain columnists in *The Times* and the *Telegraph*, will be aware of the campaign mounted by the Right against anti-racism, and the ideological mileage which they are getting out of RAT and RAT slogans ('all whites are racist', 'racism is in the mind'). The *Mail* has been in the forefront of this campaign. The article in Monday's *Mail* by Paul Johnson shows clearly how RAT has played right into Right hands.

Johnson is writing the latest of a series of *Mail* articles devoted to the reprimand given a white employee of Islington Council for (allegedly) not inviting a black employee to Christmas lunch. He writes of the 'McCarthyite witch hunt' at the Council, where 'paid informers and spies' sniff out 'wicked secret' racist thoughts and undertake to 'punish those who harbour them'.

But it this really what the Islington Council case is about? Unfortunately, the Council's own reliance on RAT as an off-the-rack 'solution' to racism has made it easy for the press to uncover a 'Race Inquisition' at work, and simply ignore the long history of racial abuse and intimidation of black employees of the Council which an earlier *New Statesman* article vividly described. The press has used RAT not only to discredit any attempt the Council might make to put an end to the systematic harassment of its black employees, but also to make all forms of fighting racism anathema to its white readers.

SM facts, not fantasies

Bernard Greaves, Leicester

Anna Durell's article about sadism and masochism (*NS* 14 June) was well-informed, balanced and very sad. However, I do feel that some points of clarification are necessary, not because of any fault in Anna's account, but because people's beliefs and expectations about SM are so wrong.

1. SM is not merely a male phenomenon. Lesbian SM is a reality which subjects those who admit to being interested in it to scarcely believable hostility, not least from elsewhere in the women's movement.
2. SM is not necessarily reflected in dress. The majority of people engaging in SM show no sign of it in the way they dress. Equally, some of the more extreme forms of denim, leather, chains and Nazi apparel are no more than symbolic displays which are not translated into SM behaviour.
3. All forms of sex involve acting out sexual fantasies. To single out SM in this respect is misleading.
4. Dominance and submission in sexual relationships is more complex than often presented. It usually only makes sense when seen in the context of the overall balance of the relationships in which it occurs.

Mole surfaces

Geoff Dennis, former civil servant at the Overseas Development Administration

Donald Trelford (Letters 14 June) states that the *Observer*'s handling of a set of leaked documents passed by me to a Labour MP 'had no bearing' on my discovery as a 'mole', and subsequent dismissal. I write, as one who should know, to say that this is false.

The *Observer* used documents I had sent in an article on Nicaragua by Hugh O'Shaughnessy, published on 12 May. In that article, one crucial marginal comment 'If we can find them!' (referring to technical reasons to be found for opposing loans to Nicaragua) was reproduced and quoted. This quote identified a specific copy of this submission, which was in *my* keeping as a filing clerk, as distinct from the general distribution of this document which was circulated to many people in the ODA and Foreign Office. From this comment alone, the possible suspect list was reduced to six, of whom I was the most likely (CND badge, general left-wing views etc). I was questioned within 48 hours.

I had in fact sent two separate sets of documents which reached two different Labour MPs. One set — papers on Chile and El Salvador — surfaced in Duncan Campbell's articles (*NS* 3 and 17 May). The set of documents on Nicaragua was revealed in the *Observer* article. A comparison of these two will provide a guide on how and how not to reveal leaked documents, as from Campbell's article I suffered no penalty whereas from the *Observer*'s I was found and eventually sacked.

Smoking: women *do* quit

Dr Alan Marsh, Principal Social Survey Officer, Office of Population Censuses and Surveys

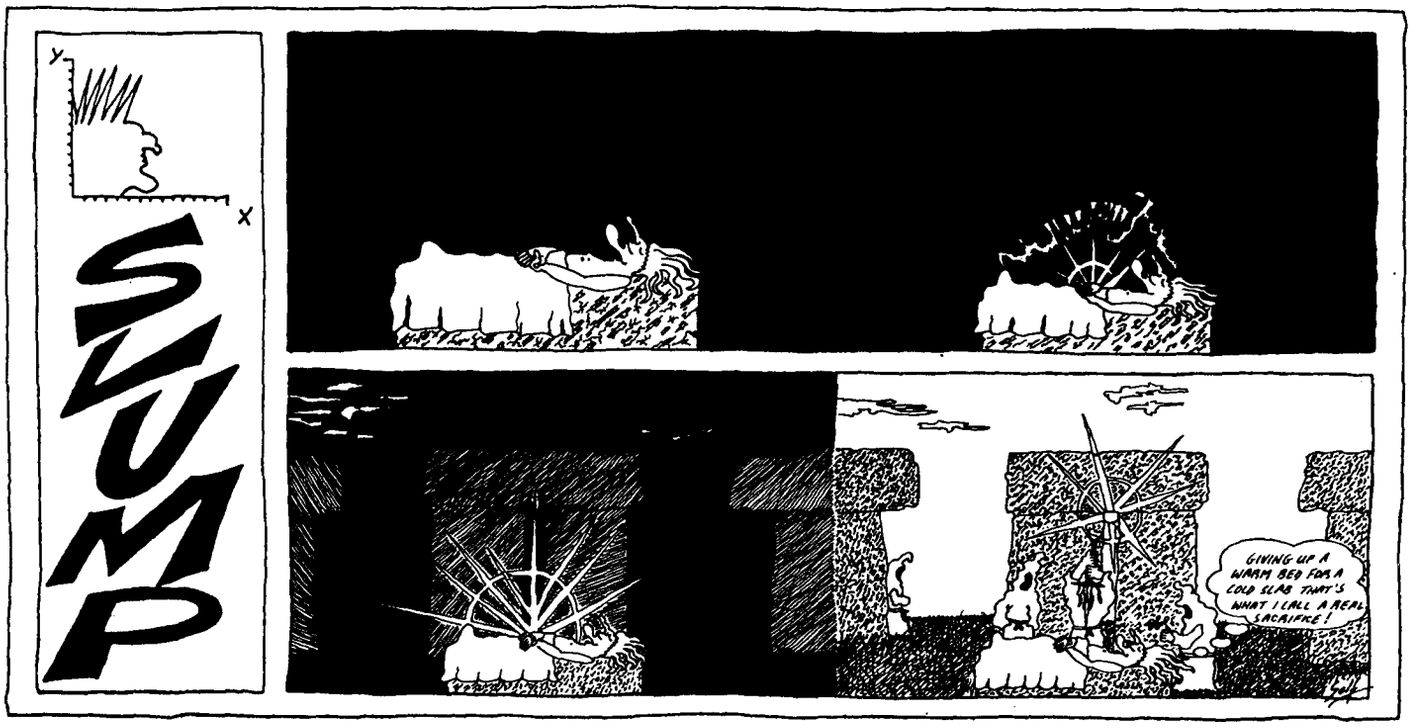
Judy Sadgrove (*NS* 14 June) quotes me in support of her argument that women compared to men find it especially difficult to give up smoking. My view is in fact the opposite of hers.

It is true that compared to men fewer women who have ever smoked cigarettes say they have given up. This difference (44 per cent male ex-smokers and 32 per cent female ex-smokers) has been shown by Dr Martin Jarvis of the Addiction Research Unit to be almost entirely accounted for by many male cigarette smokers switching to pipes and cigars. Women do not do this; they give up smoking altogether.

It is true that more women than men who attend stop-smoking clinics relapse into smoking after treatment. However, such women are a tiny minority and not at all representative of the many millions of women in Europe and America who have recently given up smoking unaided.

It is also true that women suffer more stress and anxiety than do men. Strangely, though, what evidence we have suggests that anxiety, which is so often caused by worries over health, is more incentive and not at all a barrier to giving up smoking. More than that, even highly stressed women smokers try to give up smoking and appear to succeed and fail at the same rate as equally stressed male smokers.

The idea that women who smoke are bonded to



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LETTERS

their habit by sexual and social disadvantage is patronising and wrong. Once they put their minds to it, women are as good at giving up smoking as are men.

Come out of the garden Blake...

Jeremy Silver, London NW2

'Those unlucky ones who didn't go to the performance' can listen to the poetry at the National Sound Archive — they could even go and listen to Blake Morrison. But what he fails to acknowledge (Letters 7 June) is the important distinction between the individualistic private experience of reading and a communal, active response to performance. He says that only in reading can one stop and think, implying that the collective response to poetry in performance (and perhaps that the poetry itself) is unthinking. Presumably he would not argue that a performance of a play provides no opportunities for thought.

In my article I stated that 'audiences have been learning to listen'. Poets and their audiences have for some time begun to understand the complexities and subtleties of poetry as it is performed, but it is noticeable that no critical vocabulary has been developed to talk about the experience of performed poetry. Blake Morrison clearly has not learnt a new thinking responsiveness and seems incapable or unwilling to do so. Consequently he seems to live in fear of 'cheap tricks' which might somehow corrupt his pure, 'thought-out' response to a poem.

Absurdly he argues that poetry is in some kind of embattled position with regard to theatre and that 'actors are always trying to get their hands on poetry'. This disdain for actors and for audiences of poetry seems to me to reveal Morrison's actual motives for replying to my piece.

The reality is that while he makes silly contradistinctions between socialism and socialising, Morrison actually feels threatened because the whole nature of poetry as it is publicly understood in this country is changing and it is precisely that small circle of Oxbridge 'glitterati', of which Morrison is a part, that is being directly challenged by radical poets and radical poetry.

While I believe strongly in the importance and utility of the printed word, the fact remains that the growing audience for poetry in performance which I reported is already greater and more socially mixed than the audience for new poets published by Faber, Penguin and OUP. Most crucial of all it is an audience far more involved in socialist struggles for change than Morrison has ever (in performance or in writing) shown himself to be. Poetry is changing fast and those like Morrison who write, live and read within the high-walled garden of the so-called poetry establishment are way out of touch with the ideas of truly radical poets working on the Left today.

Black access — talks continue

John Beishon, Director, Polytechnic of North London

Contrary to your report by Barry Hugill (*NS* 7 June), the Polytechnic of North London (PNL) does not face 'another major row', this time over black students. The discussions about a black student access course with Kilburn poly took place a year ago, we did not refuse to accept the course but we did have reservations about some aspects of it.

PNL currently has three access courses where entry is restricted to black students precisely because of our commitment to improving opportunities for black ethnic minority people. However, some of our staff feel that students from black only courses experience greater difficulty when joining other first year students and there is some evidence for this. PNL suggested (not, as you report, 'insisted') to Brent Council, who would be financing the course, that it might be better to have a broader student entry, for example by accepting other disadvantaged students, recognising that the students would largely be from black ethnic minority groups anyway. Quite fairly Brent replied that they particularly wanted to support black students, so PNL offered to meet with members of Brent Council to continue the discussions, which is where the matter stands.

As to the accusations of racist comments: it is not racist to say that PNL has had problems placing black students in catering and hotel work. We, like everyone else in the placement business, are constantly trying to overcome the prejudices of industry and commerce but there are limits to what we can do in the short term. This problem is part of the general issue of racism in our society and PNL is actively involved in helping to tackle this.

PNL was concerned about some of the course aims, for example: 'to give students the courage and confidence to resist and challenge racism' and 'to prepare students to take leading roles in opposing racism and other forms of discrimination'. PNL did not see these as academic aims and was asking Kilburn poly how they proposed to assess whether these aims were being achieved.

Mounting an access course for black students to help them enter higher education is one thing, combatting racism in our society is another. Both need doing, the question is — how far can and should they be done together? There is an important issue for debate here.

Islington cares. . .

Sally Gilbert, Chair, Personnel Committee, Islington Council

I wish to put Islington Council's side of the events in the Housing Department concerning racial harassment, reported in your 24 May issue.

The council, together with the trade unions, has pursued vigorously the adoption and implementation of an Equal Opportunities policy. This policy commits us to treating sexual and racial harassment seriously through our staff code procedures. We are one of the few councils where all jobs are advertised externally and internally at the same time.

The case in question was first brought to my attention around November 1984 when I took over as Chair of the Personnel Committee. I met with the Nalgo Branch Secretary and stewards from the Housing Department and undertook to make enquiries through the Director of Personnel. I also asked Nalgo for further evidence. Shortly afterwards disciplinary measures were invoked. To ensure that the serious nature of events came across, all five persons involved were brought before the Members' Disciplinary Sub-committee.

Councillors cannot act without evidence. Claims of inactivity over a long period cannot be justified if nothing is brought to the appropriate members' attention. While it is clearly management's role to discipline, Nalgo could have started proceedings through the Members' Grievance Sub-committee when they first became dissatisfied with management action — or inaction.

At the disciplinary hearing members were satisified on the evidence presented that the case against three of the charged was proved. They also felt that rather more was going on and one of the accused has been suspended pending the outcome of an investigation through the Director of Housing.

The press handling of the issue has been regrettable. It is wrong that names have been published while confidential internal disciplinary procedures are continuing. The 'popular' press has trivialised the events and the 'alternative' press has gone to the other extreme and labelled the council as 'racist'. Neither approach is helpful. Both are prejudicial to our investigations and have heightened tensions within the Department.

We cannot afford to take hasty and improper action. The Council is committed to eliminating racist activities at work. We will achieve this by implementing our policies through the agreed procedures, which are known to and understood by the workforce.

Liverpool Echo and Christopher Oakley

In an article headed 'SOGAT official sacks accusers' (*New Statesman* 19 April) allegations were reported that the SOGAT leadership on Merseyside claimed to have 'used its muscle' to avoid adverse coverage by the *Liverpool Echo* of a long-running dispute within the union, involving 2,000 members.

The article was not intended to imply that the unions had been given any right by the editor to censor stories in the *Liverpool Echo*. We have been assured by Christopher Oakley, editor of the *Liverpool Echo*, that no union would ever be given such a right. We apologise to Mr Oakley and the *Liverpool Echo* if any reader of the article thought that it implied otherwise.

A helping hand

Tony Heath, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Gwynedd

I am able to help Mike Powell, of Plaid Cymru, overcome his difficulty regarding the relative effectiveness of the Labour Party and Plaid Cymru during the miners' strike (Letters 14 June). As a member of the editorial committee of a journal published by a party riven with serious internal disagreements he must, of course, present a brave case. But he can always reach for a dictionary.

The fact is that his party's grassroots — particularly in areas where it is numerically strong — failed to deliver. His party's president Dafydd Elis Thomas MP and a handful of socialists worked extremely hard on behalf of the miners during the 12 months.

The bulk of the party was, to be kind, ineffective. . .as its inability to make the gains it had been confidently forecasting during last month's county council election campaign underlined.

Council scoreboard

In our Council scoreboard (7 June) we omitted the 2 May Cambridge City Council by-election, where the result was a gain for Labour from the Conservatives. This win gives Labour an overall majority (with 22 of the 42 seats) for the first time since it took control, as a minority administration, in 1980.

A further addition to our 2 May results is: Blyth Valley DC — SDP gain from Lab.

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Jackie Morris

PASSING THROUGH PURGATORY

Three years ago, AUDREY PECKHAM, a deputy headteacher, suffered a breakdown leading to her arrest and subsequent conviction for incitement to murder. In her book A Woman in Custody* *she describes her actual offence. Here she exposes the five terrible months she spent on remand waiting for her trial and, in particular, the almost complete lack of psychiatric care offered to those who are supposedly being assessed and looked after.*

ALTHOUGH IT is now three years ago that I suffered the breakdown which led to my arrest, remand in custody, and subsequent conviction, I still find it impossible to shake off the shadow of these events. Especially at this time of year, for it was in May and June 1982 that I underwent the worst of that horrific experience.

There has been much discussion within my immediate family since then about the ways in which I could perhaps have been saved had my needs been met. I know that my husband and my children, as well as certain of my friends, suffer much guilt as a result of feeling that there was something they could have done, should have done, to help me. I do not think that anyone could have done anything to help — with the possible exception of the psychiatric services to which I had turned for help, and from which none was forthcoming.

I had earlier, when I sensed that my grip on reality was fading, and that I needed help, gone to the Gloucester Samaritans. From the Samaritan who saw me through some of the worst hours of my life, I received no criticism, a willingness to listen, and the good advice that I should see my doctor. From him also I received the best care possible: a busy GP, he gave me hours of his time, arranging that he always saw me at the end of his surgery, so that I could talk for as long as was necessary without either of us having to worry about other patients waiting. When he felt that he could do no more for me, he sent me to a consultant psychiatrist.

I suppose that it is possible that there can be a personality clash between psychiatrist and patient. After all, both are only human beings. Whatever it was, I could not talk to this man as I had been able to talk to the Samaritan and my own doctor. I got the message from him that I was wasting his time, and that what I had to say was trivial rubbish. I could not seem to explain the great need I knew I was in. I think he saw me three times before deciding that his time could be better spent, and turning me over to his psychiatric social worker.

When this happened I felt confused and ashamed. I hated being in the situation of having to ask for help; to have asked and been effectively told that I did not need any help was shaming. What on earth then was wrong with me, I wondered? Perhaps nothing. Perhaps they were right, and I was imagining the whole thing. I continued to lead as normal a life as possible, but beneath the surface I was trying to keep my head against what felt like a roaring waterfall of crazy ideas. I used to go to bed as soon as I came home from work; weekends became lost to me, as I never got up at all, except to feed the cats. During that period, I hardly ever went shopping, ate only at work or if my husband did the cooking.

AFTER MY ARREST, before I got to trial and conviction, I had to serve five months on remand in Pucklechurch Remand Centre. The psychiatrist I had seen, belatedly realising that I had needed help, had put a bed in his hospital at my disposal, but the magistrates would not let me take it. Week after week they remanded me in custody. Ironically, one of their reasons was always the 'mental state' I was in. They recognised that I had gone to pieces, they considered me a suicide risk, but they sent me to a remand centre rather than a psychiatric hospital. Why?

I wonder now if the magistrates thought that I was receiving help inside the remand centre? If that is what they thought, they were very wrong. I arrived in Pucklechurch a broken and damaged person, in desperate need of help. So did

**A Woman in Custody* by Audrey Peckham will be published by Fontana for £2.50 on 27 June.*

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nine out of ten of my fellow inmates. My memory of those first weeks is very hazy for I was simply too ill to understand where I was or really what was happening to me. I found that I had been placed on the Hospital Wing of the centre, which gave me hope. I learned that there was a psychiatrist whom one could see, which gave me more hope. When I saw him, he treated me with kindness, gave me medication: something to help me sleep, and Tryptizol for my depression. I remember him saying to the sister something along the lines of 'we'll let this poor lady have some good night's sleep, and that will make her feel better.'

That was the sum total of the help I received. I did see this psychiatrist once more, perhaps for an hour, when he began to take down my history. He never saw me again to complete it, though I was there five months. There was nothing whatever in the way of treatment as I think psychiatric treatment is generally understood. My case was no different from that of anyone else. We soon came to understand that we were going to get nothing. The remand centre was not there to help us, only to hold us.

I SOON FOUND out that the nursing staff had similar attitudes. I had been prescribed a sleeping draught, and I was given this for five nights. I remember going to the hatch where the medicines were given out on the sixth evening and being roughly told to go away, there was nothing for me, by the sister on duty. Nobody had told me that I would not always have my precious medicine, which gave me blessed oblivion for ten hours. I lost my precarious self-control, and eventually the sister in charge allowed me to have the drug for that one night only. Next day the doctor, without seeing me, refused to write me up for any more.

This sister at the medicine hatch that night, whom I shall call Sister Smith, had been there long enough to know that everyone was always guilty of everything with which they had been charged, and probably a lot more besides, which the police would no doubt find out about one day.

She was almost as rude and unpleasant to the other sisters as she was to us, and behaved generally as if without her the whole place would descend into that limbo of liberal mollycoddling of prisoners from which only her determination to see people punished for what they had not yet been tried for was rescuing it.

I was quite shaken by our encounters, and kept out of her way as much as possible, and was always polite. Had I been provoked into some kind of fury, she would have thrown me in the Silent Strips, but I never gave her that opportunity. One good thing Sister Smith did for me was to make me so angry that I could hardly speak. This was beneficial, as there is nothing like anger to get you back into perspective.

'This apparent attitude, that we were criminals first and patients second, was psychologically damaging to us all.'

Sister Smith was always on duty. She never seemed to have any time off as the others did; she never went on holiday. There was no relief from her. She refused to allow me to take my knitting bag to my place with me, but only the needles and wool I was actually using. Then she used to go through my bag, looking to find something that should not have been there. I used to pretend that I had not seen what she was doing, because I minded very much having her going through my things.

THIS APPARENT ATTITUDE, that we were criminals first and patients second, was psychologically damaging to us all. We learned to live in an atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion. Many of us were in need of someone to talk to, but what was the use? The psychiatrist would not see us, and the nurses behaved as though they were convinced of our guilt. 'Oh', said a sister to Gillian, when she heard of my sentence, 'oh, I thought she was going to get much more than that.' And to me another nurse said: 'Well, I bet you're pleased to have got off so lightly.' She meant to congratulate me, but I answered her coldly: 'That depends on whether you think I was guilty in the first place, doesn't it?' I was so angry that I never spoke to her again, a fact for which I feel sorry as she is now dead — the gallant nurse who went back into the fire at Port Stanley hospital and died trying to save her patients.

I was very lucky that I had a friend in Pucklechurch who could take the place of the sympathetic nursing staff we did not have. Gillian had more to bear than I did, for I firmly believe that she was completely innocent. At least I had committed a crime, even if not the one of which I was accused. Gillian and I were together for a long time, and we quickly grew very close. We told each other everything; and it was Gillian, whose emotional state in spite of her wrongful arrest was not as bad as mine, who looked after me. Suppose I had been left in that atmosphere of hostility and suspicion with no way of relieving my agony during five long months?

Twice a week the psychiatrist would make his rounds. We would usually be sitting in the room where we had 'class', knitting, sewing, writing. He would come in like God, accompanied by the sister in charge. He walked round, stopping in front of each of us, while a deathly silence fell. 'Are you all right?' he would ask each of us in turn. What answer could one possibly give? 'Yes' we all said, one after the other. Sometimes, someone would ask if they could see him; once, I even screwed up my courage to make that request. The usual answer was 'Later', or 'When it's your turn'. We might not see him by request: he sent for us when he was ready.

I learned that people like me would not be seen by the psychiatrist at all. He might spend a time talking to a very seriously damaged woman through the grille in her cell door. I was cleaning the kitchen floor one day when this happened. The woman in the cell opposite was very seriously mentally ill indeed: he was as brusque with her as he had previously been with me. By that time I had learned my lesson, and no longer expected anything from this detached and unfriendly man. We did not expect loving sympathy; normal humanity would have been enough.

The real function of the remand centre psychiatrist was to see those remanded by the courts for psychiatric reports after they had been convicted but before sentence. This remand is for three weeks. For a fortnight, nothing happens. At the very end of the third week, just before they go back to court, they see the doctor, the psychiatrist, and either a social worker or a probation officer, who all provide reports to the Judge who is passing sentence. What a refinement of cruelty! I quite see that up-to-date reports are required, but if people are to be seen only in the few days before they appear in court for sentence, why do they have to be held in custody for the previous two and a half weeks? If the courts think that the prisoner is having regular sessions with the psychiatrist they are very wrong! In my case, my solicitor arranged for me to see an outside psychiatrist before my trial. He knew that I had been held in Pucklechurch for four months, and seen the psychiatrist on three occasions, two of them extremely brief.

When I left Pucklechurch remand centre for Styal prison, Gillian, who had throughout been a lot less naive than I had been about the Hospital Wing, began to push to be moved into the main body of the centre, where there was less hypocrisy. On the Wings there were prison officers, prisoners were prisoners and there was no attempt to pretend that anybody was going to help anybody else.

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Poor Gillian, although she did not know it at the time, was going to have to do another six months on remand, making a year before her trial. Of course, she was deteriorating, and I have had to watch this deterioration in succeeding years. I cannot imagine the psychological agony of being held on remand for a year for a crime you did not commit, then being convicted and facing a long prison sentence. I think enough has been said recently for it to have penetrated into people's minds that our prisons are not necessarily full of guilty people. A high proportion are not guilty at all and yet they face, like Gillian, the hopelessness of proving themselves innocent, unless their case is taken up by the media. BBC TV, through its *Rough Justice* series, has been instrumental in freeing some of these wrongly convicted people.

Gillian has now been moved to Styal, where she continues to live on in hope as she goes through the tedious and unfairly long-winded process of appeal. I used to be able to visit her. I was her one link with the outside world. That has now been changed as the governor of Styal has forbidden me to visit her on a Saturday. I am allowed to see her on a Wednesday afternoon, but as an ex-convict holding on to a job it is impossible for me to get time off for prison visiting, so Gillian now has no visitors at all.

AT MY TRIAL, the Judge ordered that I should have psychiatric treatment in prison. I got quite hopeful again until warned by my solicitor that he thought there might be difficulties with this. There were! The Pucklechurch psychiatrist still refused to see me and, when I was moved to Styal, I was clearly told at my first visit to the doctor that I would not be able to see the psychiatrist. I never did. By this time, however, I was better able to take such things philosophically, as the long months since my arrest had brought their own healing with them, and I had gone a long way towards healing myself. I knew that on my release I would be able at last to have the treatment I needed.

Fortunately, at no time during the eight months of my captivity was I physically ill, except for one short weekend with tonsillitis. I say fortunately, because the quality of medical 'care' in our prison service is as bad or worse than the psychiatric 'care'. The doctors exhibit no quality of caring. They seem unapproachable, working from the assumption that all prisoners are malingering. I know this from my own experience of frequent visits to the doctors to retain my dosage of Tryptizol. I expect, looking back, that I could have managed without it, but at the time it was all I had. No other treatment would be forthcoming

Jackie Morris

'I learned that people like me would not be seen by the psychiatrist at all. He might spend a time talking to a very seriously damaged woman through the grille in her cell door.'

if that were taken away from me, so I fought to hold on to it. I did not know if it was doing me any good or not, but I wasn't going to take the chance of having to do without it and finding myself in a deteriorating condition, with no hope of any help.

I quote from a letter I received from one prisoner: 'This week has not been a good week, as I have been in terrible pain with lumpy glands and swollen gums. I went back to the doctor three times. I ended up being given ear drops when I did not have a bad ear, Paracetamol for a couple of nights, and the rest of the time in pain. I had to do my own medication of salt water. Thank goodness it is going down now, no help from medical quarters. But with all the pain it has really pulled me down.'

I wholeheartedly support the movement for the abolition of the concept of prison doctor, and for prisoners to be treated by GPs from outside, who are not servants of the Prison Department, and are more likely to see people as patients first and prisoners second. The system we have works the other way round; you are a convict first, and therefore by definition mendacious, anti-social and untrustworthy.

WHEN I WAS released my own GP came to my house to visit me. I told him I had been having Tryptizol, and with very great reluctance he prescribed a small dose of the same drug to tide me over the first few days. He then refused to prescribe it any more. I now understand that Tryptizol, together with Fluanxol, which I was also given at Pucklechurch, have been found to do damage to the brain if taken over a long period of time. The Styal doctor should have offered me something else, not given me a choice between Tryptizol or nothing.

I have tried before to put into words what it feels like to come to terms with the fact that when you enter the Remand Centre the very fact of your remand in custody has reduced your status as a human being. The staff do not seem to entertain the idea that a certain number of their charges will be innocent; that a certain number of arrests must be wrongful.

To be arrested and committed to prison is in itself a terrible experience. The treatment which follows, from the regular horrific strip searches to the trivia of Remand Centre life, such as queuing up for every meal, being escorted everywhere by a key-jangling officer, being automatically disbelieved, distrusted, talked down to, reinforces the impression that one is a lower form of life. This is the deliberate process of institutionalisation, upon which the prison officers depend for their authority. This authority is jealously guarded and reinforced. The officer addresses the prisoner by her first name, the prisoner calls the prison officer 'Miss'. As soon as I realised the psychological implications of this technique, I never addressed them as anything. But a slip of a girl half my age could call me 'Audrey' and order me about.

It seems to me to be small wonder that people coming out of our prisons find such difficulty in gaining sufficient confidence to rebuild their lives. While inside, they have been subjected daily to a quite deliberate regime which can only lower their self-esteem, self-reliance, ability to think and act for themselves, and their self-confidence is bound to suffer. Even if society chooses to take the view that crime must be punished by loss of liberty, I would have thought that it could realise that to induce loss of self-esteem as well, in most cases unnecessarily, really is in no sense whatever a good thing for that society. It is certainly a desperately bad thing for the individual concerned. □

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Mystery story

Mervyn Jones

Here Lies
ERIC AMBLER *Weidenfeld* £10.95

THE TITLE of this autobiography gives us a clear enough message, and we haven't got far before Eric Ambler tells us firmly: 'Only an idiot believes that he can write the truth about himself.' Factual accuracy would seem to be a more attainable aim, but even that isn't so easy. Leonard Woolf, who produced one of the best autobiographies ever written, began by putting down what he remembered, then consulted old diaries and found that his memories of time and place were often mistaken.

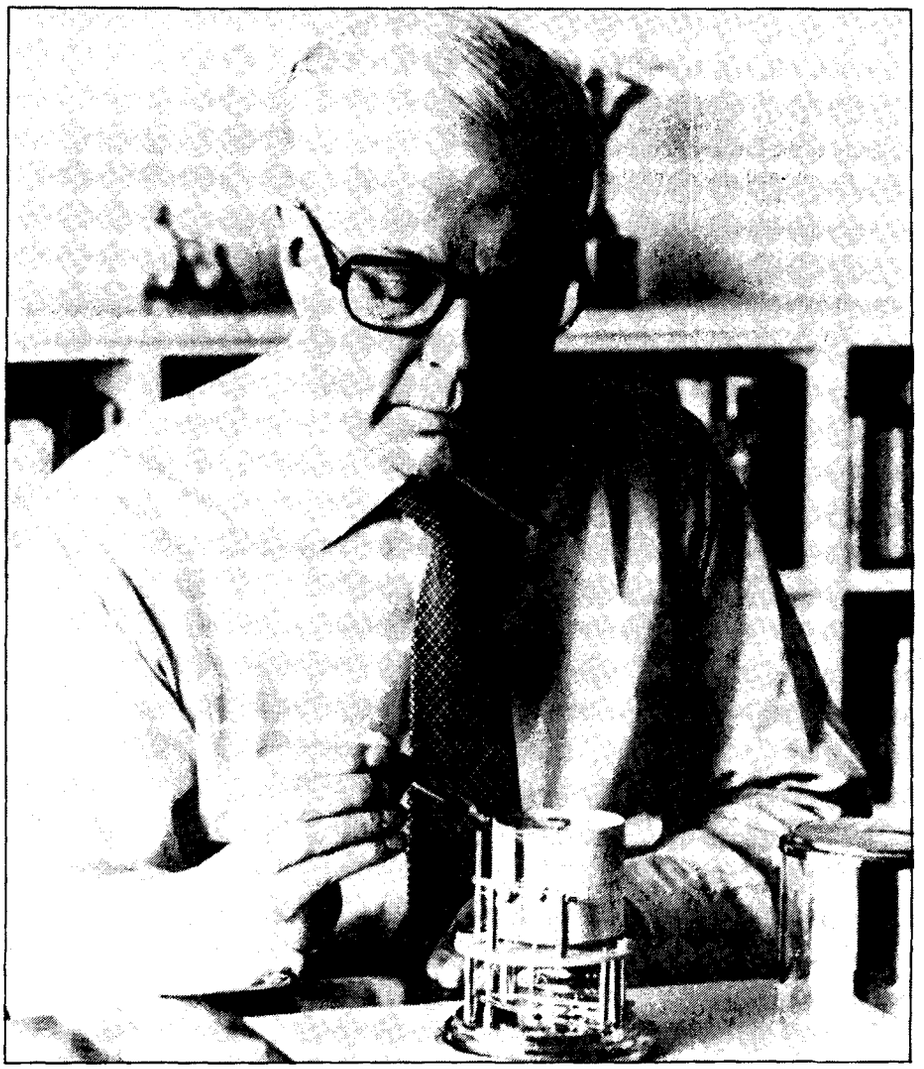
Ambler mentions that his wife Louise (who was American) 'had applied for a passage back to England before Pearl Harbour, but the end of American neutrality had made the journey easier'. Actually, Mrs Ambler crossed the Atlantic before Pearl Harbour, as I can testify because I was on the same ship. As well as being a beautiful woman, she was intelligent, witty and of cheerful temperament. I offer this description because Ambler doesn't. He gives us character sketches of his parents, some uncles and aunts, and an assortment of employers, colleagues at work and Army officers, but not of his first wife nor, for that matter, his present wife. This is, in fact, a distinctly reticent book.

After beginning adult life with jobs in industry and in advertising, Ambler established himself by the age of 30 as a successful writer, with good sales in Britain and America and two books bought by the movies. With *The Mask of Dimitrios* and *Journey Into Fear*, he is entitled to claim that — with Chandler and Hammett — he created the crime novel as we now know it out of the decaying soil of the old detective story. I was hoping that, in *Here Lies*, he would say something about the line of thinking that impelled him toward this development. But he doesn't.

So much for what isn't in the book. As an indication of what is, let me quote a few characteristic passages:

> The manufacture of different grades of vulcanized rubber (VIR) for electrical insulation and of 'cab-tyre' sheathing (CTS) to defend the insulation were processes of polymerization.
>
> None of the boats was very long. . .A few had auxiliary engines. All carried powerful acetylene lights. . .The lights would attract cuttle fish up from the extreme depths to the intermediate ones where they could be offered large six-point hooks generously baited with fresh sardines.
>
> The guns and fire control equipment that concerned us were the 3.7-inch 'heavy' with the Vickers predictor and the 40mm. Bofors which could be aimed either by the Kerrison predictor through a system of oil motors or manually.

It dawned on me, by the time I'd reached the Kerrison predictor, that this was what Eric Ambler really wanted to tell us about in his autobiography. To venture a generalisation, writers of crime fiction (like writers of science fiction and also pornography) are more interested in things than in people. That must be why, in spite of considerable literary talents and narrative powers, they don't write novels in the more traditional sense of the term. It also accounts, to a great degree, for their wide popularity. Many people want to know about electrical insulation, fishing with acetylene lights and the aiming of the Bofors gun, and to put themselves in the hands of authors who are reliable on such matters, neglected by E.M. Forster, Virginia Woolf and that lot.



Eric Ambler: modestly displaying interest in *things*

Yet, although *Here Lies* is an unrevealing and at times a boring book, it is also a skilful book. There is, indeed, a proven technique for writing an autobiography. You must be modest and self-deprecating, and attribute your successes to luck or a helping hand rather than to your abilities. You are tolerant about the blunders and failures of others (Ambler hates all the films made from his books, but doesn't get worked up about it). You may record that you have been admired and praised, but only to remark on the generosity and good character of those who surprised you with these tributes. When you describe dramatic scenes, sharp arguments or quarrels, your role is that of the detached spectator. If placed in situations of danger (for instance, in war) you make it clear that your conduct was unheroic, though the reader may infer from your sustained capacity for cool observation that you didn't panic. You mention that persons of the opposite sex have entered and passed out of your life, but avoid investigating the reasons and never apportion (or admit) blame. You write of friends in terms of affectionate commendation, especially if they are no longer friends. Throughout, you retain your wry, gentle sense of humour. It is for the reader, with no urging on your part, to conclude that you're a very nice person and it must be a pleasure to know you. Yes, it's been done before; but seldom so impeccably as by Eric Ambler. □

Private obsessions public prose

Stephen Brook

John Ruskin: The Early Years
TIM HILTON *Yale* £12.95

TWELVE YEARS ago I had the bright idea of writing the biography of John Ruskin, but when I consulted a literary agent he informed me that at least four other writers were working

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on the same bright idea. I immediately abandoned the project, and not without relief. For, as Tim Hilton reminds us, Ruskin published 250 titles in 59 years and compiled an almost equal quantity of diaries and letters. The 39 volumes of the Library Edition of his works fill eight feet of shelf space, and the diaries and letters a few feet more. To write an adequate life of Ruskin requires an appetite for work almost as prodigious as the subject's.

Over the last ten years a few of those biographies have been published, notably those by Joan Abse and John Dixon Hunt. Both are quite good, but neither is authoritative. Observing the Ruskin industry from the sidelines, I have long been aware that the smart money has been on Tim Hilton, and his biography, of which this is the first volume, is as close to definitive as we're likely to get for many years. Perhaps it's because I opened this book with such high expectations that I closed it with a surprised disappointment.

Let me begin by pointing to the book's best qualities. Ruskin's own experiences coloured almost everything he wrote. His private obsessions spill out through his public prose. It's possible to enjoy Ruskin while remaining in ignorance of his life, but I don't believe it's possible to understand him fully. The trouble is that Ruskin was notoriously self-contradictory, both in statements of belief and opinion that allowed him, for instance, to be seen as a hero by Tories and radicals alike, and in revelations of his personal experience. His own autobiographical writings, such as *Praeterita*, are thoroughly misleading. Moreover, the Library Edition was edited by his disciples on the basis of material provided by Joan Severn, the loyal cousin who cared for Ruskin in his old age and destroyed documents she considered prejudicial to his reputation. Hilton quite rightly treats both Ruskin's own declarations and the biographical data provided by the Library Edition with great caution, and it is a primary virtue of the biography that he explores much unpublished material and boldly corrects versions of the truth put out by Ruskin and his circle. For instance, Hilton finds little evidence that Ruskin's childhood was as repressive as *Praeterita* suggests, and questions the momentousness of a celebrated occasion when Ruskin claimed to have lost his faith in Turin.

Hilton is also sufficiently immersed in the material to attempt clear judgments. The course of Ruskin's wild love for the teenage Rose La Touche (to be dealt with in the next volume) was much affected by his relations with the child's parents, and Hilton's brief assessment of the elder La Touches is masterly. If absorption in his material is essential to coming to grips with Ruskin, it also poses great dangers. Ruskin was undoubtedly a great teacher but he was also a great bully, and a hectoring tone is a constant feature of his writing. In reading and studying Ruskin, it's hard to resist being coopted. His eloquence, combined with his relentless egotism, almost requires us to view the world through his eyes. Since he saw so richly and wrote so magnificently, it's tempting to settle under his wing, but it also means that it's extremely difficult to remain detached.

Ruskin was a great art critic, a startling social critic and as stupendous a prose stylist as the

Richard Willson

Victorian era produced — but he was also a most bizarre human being, and Hilton surely underplays this, in particular his domination by his parents. Even in his maturity Ruskin would submit letters to *The Times* to his father for prior approval. The treatment of Ruskin's young wife Effie not just by her husband but by his family was disgraceful, even given the constraints of Victorian expectations of roles within marriage. Hilton quotes a long letter by Ruskin in which he outlines to Pauline Trevelyan some of the projects he has in mind:

> I want to give short lectures to about 200 at once...and I want to teach Illumination to the sign painters and the young ladies; and to have the prayer books all *written* again...and to make copies of all fine 13th century manuscripts, and lend them out...and I want to have a little Academy of my own in all the manufacturing towns...while I go on with my usual work about Turner and collect materials for a great work I mean to write on politics.

Hilton describes this letter as 'romantic and utopian', but surely the word is 'manic', even allowing for Ruskin's extraordinary capacity for work.

Hilton has little to say about the content and quality of Ruskin's published works, but that's understandable. Those who seek exegesis and criticism of Ruskin are already well catered for. More troubling is Hilton's failure to provide a narrative sweep. Too many of his chapters are divided into brief sections as he strives to deal with the many concurrent strands coursing through Ruskin's life. Its multi-layered quality does pose appalling problems for the biographer, but I can't help feeling Hilton or his publishers should have given him a little more elbow room. The book often seems cramped.

Although Hilton is repeatedly over-generous to his subject, he does demonstrate throughout the book a sureness of touch that makes one hope we won't have to wait a further 20 years for the concluding volume. □

And still they die

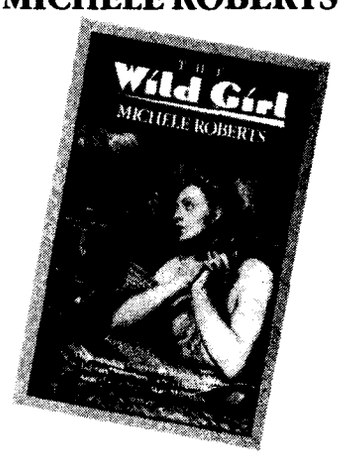
Nigel Cross

Ill Fares the Land
SUSAN GEORGE *Writers & Readers* £3.95
Famine: A Man-Made Disaster?
INDEPENDENT COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ISSUES
Pan £1.95
Africa in Crisis
LLOYD TIMBERLAKE *Earthscan* £3.95

AGA KHAN backs Susan George? Well, almost. Susan George is, of course, the notorious scourge of the aid establishment, hustler for the rural poor and author of *How the Other Half Dies*. Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan is not a playboy, but a former UN High Commissioner for refugees and co-chairman, with Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan, of the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues (ICIHI). The Prince and Ms George now seem to agree, from the evidence of their latest books, on the causes of rural poverty in general and the current African famine in particular. Such accord between the radical and the chic is to be welcomed, even if it is of little immediate benefit to the 10 million or more Africans who are starving to death.

The most irritating aspect of the ICIHI

THE
Wild Girl
MICHÈLE ROBERTS



'A beautiful and haunting book' **Weekend**
'Bold and moving' **The Guardian**
'Michèle Roberts is intelligent and passionate; by her rich use of symbols and metaphor she transforms feminist cliché into something alive and moving' **Times Literary Supplement**
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Brandt-like report on famine (replete with a hand-wringing foreword by David Owen the UK commission member) and of Susan George's collection of essays and of Lloyd Timberlake's *Africa in Crisis*, published by the environmental agency Earthscan, is their several claims to offer brave, radical, though also tentative solutions to years of development failure.

Susan George, according to a colleague's foreword, continues to challenge 'reigning development shibboleths'. The authors of the ICIHI report allegedly 'depart radically from established [development] wisdom'. *Africa in Crisis* asserts that the tragedy and chaos of modern Africa is 'caused by unwise governments and foolish aid and development policies'. So who are 'they', the stick-in-the-mud enemies, the crummy development planners, the rotten governments?

They are us and certainly the authors of these books. They are the 80,000 foreign aid workers involved in peddling advice, policies, technologies to the long-suffering ever poorer poor. They are all of us, black and white, who pontificate, research or simply rule. They are certainly the members of ICIHI, eminent development blatherers like Sonny Ramphal (Commonwealth) and Robert McNamara (World Bank) and ex-Presidents Luis Echeverria (Mexico) and Leopold Senghor (Senegal) whose peasantry have not noticed the difference. They include the UN and European agencies which fund Earthscan, and they include Susan George, Senior Fellow of the Transnational Institute, who at least has the grace to admit it.

So the informed reader who comes to these books expecting much that is brave and new, or even controversial, will be disappointed. In fact all three of them say much the same things. This is unsurprising as they have, in effect, been written by the same people. Pierre Spitz, adviser to the ICIHI, is warmly thanked by Susan George for his influence on her thought. Robert Chambers is similarly thanked by ICIHI and is often quoted by Lloyd Timberlake who himself gave evidence to the ICIHI enquiry. Even I must declare a tiny interest as a contributor to the *Economist Development Report* much of which has been included in the ICIHI famine report thanks to the generosity of Mark Malloch Brown who is editor of both.

Though the atmosphere is thick with consensus the style varies. The ICIHI report is written in the crisp *Economist*-manner which sounds so authoritative. Short and pithy, it pulls the issues and some remedies together and provides the best overview of current aidthink. *Africa in Crisis* is less dull if more rambling. It has more human interest stories and conveniently summarises the findings of earlier Earthscan reports on issues such as desertification, energy and trees. Susan George offers the most stimulating discussion of the political issues and, as always, is splendidly deflating.

Their joint thesis may be summarised as follows. Africa is a continent in crisis. The reasons for this are complex (a favourite word): chief among them has been the failure of most African governments and their advisers — Zimbabwe may turn out to be the exception — to support their food producing sectors, especially the rural poor.

More and more land is given over to cash crops for foreign exchange — a colonial legacy — less is available for growing food, which has to be imported. When export earnings fall, which is most of the time, food aid becomes a vital supplement to imports. This further reduces incentives to grow food. And to cap it all, the population continues to grow faster than the indigenous food supply. Such cycles have led to environmental as well as economic bankruptcy. Traditional, pre-colonial farming methods both exploited and preserved marginal land. Now it is merely exploited.

Matters have been made worse, not better, by aid donors who have preferred to invest in large-scale, administratively convenient infrastructure projects — roads, dams, canals — where there is a reasonable chance of recovering the initial investment in goods and services. The losers are always the landless peasants, the small tenant farmers, the rural poor generally, who lack any political clout and are too dispersed and too weak to go on the rampage. As the ICIHI report notes 'there is no doubt that the lasting impact on the African political economy of each cycle of famine is an increase in the gap between the rich and the poor'. The rich never starve — not even in sub-Saharan Africa.

So what is the prescription? Here is the real difficulty. Every suggestion for ending this ruthless extermination of poor people — from credit for the creditless, restructured pricing and marketing systems, research into traditional farming practices, environmental protection, even a debt moratorium — has been made, year after year, since the last great famine over a decade ago.

Each of the three books presses for urgent action. All we can hope for is that the second time round and a few million deaths later, all our books, pamphlets, articles, workshops, conferences, video reports, all our advice, experience, understanding, sympathy does not echo back at us from the wastes of the Sahel but settles on 'them', the unwise governments and foolish aid agencies, rather than burying the rag-and-bone families, the citizens of the camps, in a futile if eloquent shroud. □

The child and the toy bear

Penelope Shuttle

It is essential
to have the bear
in the bed
though he is nameless
and disregarded throughout the day.
At night he must lie beside her
so that she can sleep,
his black nose firmly clenched
in her hand,
the spar that keeps her afloat all night.

Portraits of a poet

Nicholas Jacobs

Rilke: A Life
WOLFGANG LEPPMANN translated by Russell M. Stockman and Richard Exner
Lutterworth Press £17.50
The Sacred Threshold: A Life of Rainer Maria Rilke
J. F. HENDRY *Carcanet* £9.95

BEFORE BRECHT came on the scene, Rilke was by far the most widely known and translated poet writing in German. Few would dispute his greatness as a poet. Any who do should be referred, apart from to his poetry, to Maurice Bowra's great essay on him in *The Heritage of Symbolism*.

Neither of these books strains to establish that greatness. Both go some way to illuminating it. Leppmann's by its patient and sympathetic — sympathetic to both Rilke and the reader — narrative biography, Hendry's by the quality and quantity of its well-contextualised translations by Hendry himself (including passages from Rilke's exceptional letters).

Leppmann's book is a full-length, evenly painted portrait, always perceptive, with here and there an appropriate comparison, but surprisingly lacking in intellectual and literary background. Hendry's study is less than half as long but is all marrow, a beautifully written book, concise yet without a moment of crowding or rush. It contains proportionately much more quotation than Leppmann, and more analysis and literary background.

Like Keats's, Rilke's name has something soft and toothless about it — a little disembodied, perhaps. Rilke himself referred to his body 'running the risk of becoming the caricature of my spirituality'. He was anaemic, and died — though not particularly young (he was 51) — of leukaemia. However, both these books show how false such a general image is. (As for Brecht's crude smirking at what he considered Rilke's homosexual approach to God in his poetry, that only reflects Brecht's inability to read the poetry and to separate creator from creation, in this case a novice monk in whose voice Rilke wrote some of his most immediately approachable and most beautiful early poetry, in *The Book of Hours*. Rilke as homosexual is in any case a bit of a non-starter. Hendry points out that he had very few intimate male friends. He was also the author of some of the greatest erotic heterosexual poetry this century.)

Rilke speculated that he was incapable of love because he could not love his mother. It seemed to follow that women flocked to this certainly very passionate man who was so sensitive that he refers in an early poem to the ability to feel so much anguish that his pulse might burst. Leppmann is particularly full of detail about the fundamental relationship with the famous Lou von Salomé, who played the role of mother, lover and eventually friend when Rilke was most in need, and was a crucial figure in and out of his life to the very end.

Rilke seems to have fallen in love with the

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painter Paula Modersohn-Becker and to have married her friend, the sculptor and former Rodin pupil Clara Westhoff, on the rebound. Like all his relations with women, this one was impermanent, but there was never a total break. It is good to have from Leppmann some details of Worpswede, the communal and vaguely socialistic artists' colony begun in the 1890s near Bremen where Rilke met his wife, about which little so far is available in English.

Rilke as father and even grandfather punctures further the very false image he has acquired, as do the contacts he had during the First World War with the anti-war Expressionists and pacifists (like Romain Rolland) in Switzerland. Like Thomas Mann, Rilke was in Munich at the war's end and, in stark contrast to Mann's disdain for it, actively sympathised with the always threatened Bavarian socialist republic of 1918/19. He knew the socialist leader Kurt Eisner, as well as Ernst Toller, and put his flat at the disposal of the revolutionaries, which brought him under suspicion of Bolshevism from the authorities. However, Leppmann shows how wrong it would be to think of Rilke as a political animal and relates how Sophie Liebknecht tried unsuccessfully to persuade Rilke to read the newspapers and keep abreast of what was going on.

Leppmann is also generous with quotations but is unevenly served by his special poetry translator. He takes his reader gently and uncondescendingly by the hand and this makes his book an excellent introduction as well as being a comprehensive life. All admirers of Ted Hughes's animal poetry should read Rilke, beginning, alongside Hughes's 'The Jaguar', with 'The Panther' (only adequately translated in Leppmann). Yeats lovers might turn first to 'Leda'. And Wagnerites will be grateful to Leppmann for introducing them to *The Lay of the Love and Death of Cornet Christoph Rilke* which, in a few intense pages, evokes all the headiness of the richest of Wagner's love, and death, duets.

Neither of these books contains any consideration of Rilke's impact in Germany or the wider world, though Hendry's does include a final chapter which attempts to survey Rilke's achievement as a whole. It also contains an outstanding translation of one of Rilke's most famous poems, 'Archaic Torso of Apollo', and excellently used quotations from Rilke's extensive correspondence. Auden once referred to Rilke as the Santa Claus of loneliness, and one of Rilke's poems connects letter writing with loneliness. It therefore seems only natural that he was, like Keats, a generous correspondent. Hendry's account of Rilke's childhood, though briefer, is more striking, and he includes a more detailed account of Rilke's meetings with Tolstoy. Altogether, Hendry's is a more stimulating and satisfactory book. It is written with great freedom (he does not bother with references and this doesn't seem to matter). Hendry is himself a poet, and some affinity with the essence of his subject perhaps explains why his portrait of Rilke is so much clearer and more lively. However, in their identification of the important landmarks in Rilke's emotional and intellectual life, and in celebrating his work, the two books are largely in agreement. Leppmann's originally appeared in the US in 1981, evidently too late to have been consulted by Hendry. Their basic agreement can therefore be seen as a tribute to Rilke's own total integrity. □

FICTION

Snow balls

Richard Deveson

Bright Lights, Big City
JAY McINERNEY *Cape* £8.50
Like the Big Wolves
WILBUR SANDERS *Quartet* £8.95
Offside
GISELA ELSNER *Virago* £9.95 & £3.95

YOU WRITE in the second person. You figure, hey, no one else does it, this way you have to get to be noticed. You write in short sentences. Like this. So did Hemingway, but what the hell. Hemingway wasn't into the white powder that made Bolivia famous. You are. You spend a lot of time in bathrooms coasting skywards on white Bolivian vapour trails. It does wonders for your prose style. Not so many wonders for your sex life. Or your job, but what the etc. You work on a magazine that is not a million shiny Bergdorf ads removed from the *New Yorker*. You are also more of a *New Yorker* reader than you might care to admit. You are *au fait* with brand labels and night spots and how much everything costs and bread. Deep down you are really the kind of guy who wakes up early Sunday and steps out to cop the *Times* and croissants. You are really the kind of guy who would call that girl from Princeton and say how about dinner. You would do all this if you weren't chasing white powder trails and your estranged go-getting wife. You would tell the *New Yorker* to go jump in the Hudson River. You would become a writer. You would write **Bright Lights, Big City** by Jay McInerney.

You think you know you are self-centred, but you don't know how self-centred you really are. You perhaps think that 'You' comes on less egotistical than 'I', but you reckoned without the spin-off in complacency. You don't know whether or not you think cocaine is glamorous, but glamorise it is what you do. You have a fist fight with your brother; you say, 'I'm sorry.' Do you realise you sound like a TV movie? You end with a self-pitying vision of your dead mother and the aroma of fresh wholemeal. Do you realise you're howling for the breast?

Wilbur Sanders's **Like the Big Wolves** is a much more attractive novel. Laczi Kovacs is a Hungarian sculptor who came to London after 1956, enjoyed a brief moment of public recognition but seems by the 1970s to have become forgotten again. Anya Jevons is a South African who runs a trendy boutique next door to Laczi's studio. When they first get to know one another, Laczi lays witheringly into Anya's disdain for history, her reduction of the political to the personal; no-flies Anya retorts that radicals are just whining for a free lunch. But as their affair turns into marriage, so Laczi's politically-inspired sculptures become

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commercial successes, while Anya gets depressed, sells her shop and finds herself drifting into demo-politics. Positions have been virtually reversed by the time a somewhat-telegraphed climax sets fascist pigs against the opponents of racism in a re-run of the Southall riots, and blood is shed.

Sanders commits his own misdemeanours. The narrator is liable to say: 'The dorsal profile of the inland horizon was so black against the rose-coloured sky that the retina invented an incandescent thread, whiter than light itself, at the point of junction.' And red-headed, full-fleshed, raunchy-laughing Anya is liable to bellow at wiry-chested, ruthlessly-honest, Central-European-aphoristic Laczi: 'Well?. . .I suppose you'll tell me you've been "happy" in bed too? Eh? Is that the pitch of your expectations, you limp little worm? That's it, is it? Just enough to break your sleep and flatter your complacencies, before you pass out again? Well, doze on, my fine Hungarian friend!' On the other hand, this book is about the world in which we live, it pitches genuine arguments and emotions against one another, it has great drive, and it suggests a moral about the ultimate unavailingness of art which, however distasteful, must surely be true.

Offside. Author: Gisela Elsner. Translator: Anthea Bell. Country: Federal Republic of Germany. Population: two (plus walk-ons). Distances: city centre of M, a few km; city of N, more km (further details unavailable). Architecture: middle-class 1960s housing estate; boring. Principal forms of employment: few details available; very boring. Recreations: boredom, tranquillisers, promiscuity, sexist exploitation, capitalist exploitation, alienation, anomie, Angst, taedium vitae. Rateable value: don't ask. Early closing: recommended.

Don't miss Soon after entering *Offside* (pp. 17-19), spot the splendid 58-line passage in which Lilo Besslein puts on her eye make-up. ('She opened a small jar of silvery pale blue eye-shadow, ran her forefinger over the creamy substance, and applied it first to her right eyelid, then to her left eyelid. Next she opened a little bottle of liquid eye-liner, dipped a fine brush into the black fluid,' *und so weiter*.) Note the marvellously subtle way in which the boredom, alienation, anomie etc. of Lilo Besslein's life, her reification *into* a commodity *by* her husband Ernst Besslein, are here already adumbrated and, in their obsessionality, embodied.

Worth a try After plodding through an unrewarding midtown section, you'll happen unexpectedly upon pp. 175-8, 97 delightful lines which describe Lilo Besslein trying on dresses (divorce of sense of selfhood from at-home-ness in the body, incorporation of female sexuality by consumer capitalism, etc.).

Stayers only There's another monument to obsessionality at the very end of the tour (pp.202-3). Catch the chauvinistic Ernst Besslein, his wife now safely out of the way, putting the finishing touches to his new lime-green furniture and settling down to his beer and sports news. ('He arranged. . .He moved. . .He carried. . .Then he went. . .He put. . .Then he. . .' etc.)

Quote 'A modern counterpart to Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*' (anon.).

(Fun note The joke is on page 205.) □

FILMS

It was a wild and stormy night

John Coleman

Close encounters of the tired kind: Nathalie Baye and Alain Delon in *Our Story*. . .

Our Story (15)
Lumiere
Grace Quigley (15)
Classic, Haymarket
Runaway (15)
Leicester Square Theatre; London release
She'll Be Wearing Pink Pyjamas (15)
Classic, Haymarket; Gate, Bloomsbury

SUDDENLY WE ARE experiencing a rush of Bertrand Bliers: if not precisely to the head, at least to the screen. There's *My Best Friend's Girl*, reviewed rather generously here a couple of weeks ago (anything with Isabelle Huppert in it starts my susceptible Geiger-counter ticking like mad); and now comes the very latest Blier, **Our Story**, which picked up a couple of Césars — French Oscars — for Alain Delon as Best Actor and for Blier himself, not for his direction but for producing the Best Screenplay. One hates to think what the rest of the crop's screenplays were like. After various previous gestures in that direction, M. Blier now clearly sees himself as ready to take over the mantle of the late, great Luis Buñuel. In the curious, farcical and largely tedious event, it proves to fit him like a shrunk shroud.

Alcoholic Robert (Delon) is blearily accosted in his first-class railway compartment by a wan and dishevelled mystery woman (Nathalie Baye), who says, 'I want to tell you a story'. It soon emerges that what she really wants — she makes no bones about it — is a quick screw, then bye bye for ever. But Robert is then seen alighting from the train when she does and they are soon together in a station hotel room, as beer-swilling Robert cheerfully declares, 'I'm going to talk for hours', adding 'I'm a very amusing type'. Little that ensues supports this claim. The woman has previously explained she sits on platform benches, waiting to find men she fancies. 'You may be a bitch,' says Robert, 'but . . . you have the face of an angel'. He knows how to turn a compliment, too. At a low ebb, he insists on installing himself in her chalet in Savoie, making frequent trips to the fridge for beers, saying she may bed whom she likes so long as she helps him to wreck his life and, one day perhaps, smiles her 'Madonna smile'. Taking him swiftly at his word, she takes a handful of banknotes from his savings as a garage-owner and leaves to go dancing.

Much later, this Donatienne (whose name we hear for the first time) returns with a quartet of male chums and a girl, intent on getting Robert out. The girl has some interrupted story about a maid, or being a maid. But Robert is persistent, bent on some kind of self-destruction, enamoured of his potential destroyer. 'It's the story of a man who comes back,' he tells poor old Donatienne, slumped at her kitchen table. He has bought a Polaroid to snap that smile

. . . and Katharine Hepburn with Nick Nolte in *Grace Quigley*

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Recommended viewing

A regular selection by our critic from films still doing the rounds

Amadeus Peter Shaffer's rich, vulgar and potent fantasy about mediocrity's revenge on genius, sumptuously directed by Milos Forman, with F. Murray Abraham outstanding as Salieri and Mozart's music cascading from the screen.

A Private Function Blissful and British double first as Michael Mowbray steers top-notch cast through puncturingly word-perfect Alan Bennett comedy set in 1947 Yorkshire. Nagged by social-climbing wife, meek chiropodist gets revenge on local unworthies by stealing black-market pig. (Maggie Smith, Michael Palin).

Beverly Hills Cop Brilliant young Eddie Murphy (*48 HRS, Trading Places*) hoists workaday hunt-the-cocaine thriller into compulsive viewing.

Witness Australian director Peter Weir in fine-tuned control of offbeat US thriller. Rugged but honest city policeman (Harrison Ford), grudgingly harboured from bent colleagues by time-warp Amish farmers, shares unconsummated love with Kelly McGillis's superb widow until the inevitable, estranging shoot-out.

when or if it happens. Time passes, as it will, and another male quartet drives up, summoned by Donatienne, a divorcée whose kids have understandably been put in care: the men, friends and kin of Robert, have come from Paris, where he — one surmises — has abandoned a wife and children. It goes on and on like this. Another bemused pick-up of Donatienne's is brought to the chalet. She hands his case to Robert (urging him to leave), telling its indignant owner that this is a story where suitcases and such are irrelevant. There is a brawl and indignant neighbours complain of night noises: in his red dressing-gown, Emile (Michel Galabru) leads the protests, but is as rapidly leading the revels as more and more folk congregate nocturnally at his huge open-plan place.

A few moments of rancid humour transpire, with Emile offering his wife to Robert, a crowd collecting in her bedroom as Robert takes full advantage of such dream-stuff and Emile exhibiting jealousy at his replacement's prowess. There are several bad, fast, untranslatable rhyming 'puns' on the expression '*plus tard*': *cauchemar* (nightmare) and *plumard* (bed, slangy); and anyone inclined seriously to scrutinise motives and motifs in the rest of this self-indulgent occasion should seize on these two words in particular. Robert's bad trip has him losing Donatienne the slut, only to visit a married old acquaintance of hers, a schoolteacher who comes to tell him a bedtime story and proposes afters (and *she* is also Nathalie Baye), and eventually to be woken by the four Parisian chaps in his compartment at the Gare de Lyon, from where he returns home to little daughters and wife (guess who?). The sub-Buñuel elements in this only-a-dream charivari are undigested, merely there to make one appreciate how good the best of the surrealist master was and how difficult it is to impose interesting order on fantasies of the unconscious. *Cherchez la femme* and it turns out to have been the missus all along? Hardly enough.

Not even the incontrovertible Katharine Hepburn can save the geriatric, would-be black comedy of Anthony Harvey's **Grace Quigley** from sogginess. Eavesdropping the contract-killing of her beastly landlord, resolute old Grace (Ms Hepburn) hires Seymour (Nick Nolte), the hit-man, to advance her own end. Then it becomes a matter, rather, of advancing her own ends as Seymour is persuaded to do away with several of her aged friends who seek quietus: Grace finds herself in business, with a new lease on life. It would need the old Ealing touch and an Ealing script to cope with such tacky premises: instead, there is an unfunny psychiatrist, a hearse-chase, a dollop of momism — the whole wrapped in a cloud of ethical confusion.

Westworld director Michael Crichton, a prolific writer, has also done the script for **Runaway**, an intermittently holding SF thriller, with Tom Selleck as an expressionless cop in charge of dealing with defective robots. Villainous Gene Simmons, refugee from the rock-group Kiss, shows the whites of his eyes to effect as master-criminal planting chips in domestic machines to make them murderous (he just enjoys slaughter). Selleck is awarded vertigo, to render some high-up sequences more exciting; there's a gun that fires personalised tracking bullets; the plot is thin.

John Goldschmidt's **She'll Be Wearing Pink Pyjamas** has eight women, with Julie Walters predominant, improbably signed up for a Lake District outward-bound course. Their inward-unleashed confessions as they swing from ropes, scale rock-faces and giggle boozily tend to be run-of-the-male. Words by Eva Hardy. □

POP

Dissatisfy my soul

Barney Hoskyns

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN is the king of rock'n'roll and the guy who sold out every stadium in the West and . . . I didn't see him play. It breaks my heart, but your humble correspondent is obviously not deemed important enough to merit a review ticket. I toyed with the idea of writing up the show regardless, but thought better of it. Suffice it to say that Bruce is a phenomenon of our times and a decent sort and we'll return to the subject at a later date.

Fortunately, there has been a large number of album releases this month, including the posthumous last record by Marvin Gaye. I have to say that of all the hyperbolic white apotheoses of deceased black soulmen, none strikes me as sillier than that which turns this deranged, freebased wreck of a man into some sleek and noble Moorish stud. **Dream of a Lifetime** (CBS) is a bathetic affair, half unerotic electro-sex, half windy orchestral schmaltz with titles like 'Life's Opera'. 'Sanctified Lady' sums up the paradox of the Great American Soul Man, who wants lots of sex and lots of drugs but also wants to keep his place in the pew. Gaye made some mighty music, but this is its hollowest echo.

Womack & Womack gave soul back to the adults with last year's *Love Wars*, and it was a lovely revelation, particularly Linda's wise, intimate, limpid voice. Their songs are impressively offbeat, informal, their lyrics refreshingly stripped of cliché. Sorry to report that the downhome Ashford & Simpson of **Radio M.U.S.C. Man** (Elektra) lacks the domestic hothouse urgency of its predecessor.

Why has American soul screwed up so many Englishmen? Why is it always the first item on their shopping list? Ask The Style Council, whose whole *modus operandi* seems to be shopping around for the correct stylistic appurtenances — the right suits and haircuts, the CND beret and Gaggia espresso machine. Visit **Our Favourite Shop** (Polydor) and find the usual satisfying soul tunes married to a thoroughly jejune vision of England. Paul Weller would like to be a Soul Man, but he can't sing. He would like to be a *political* Soul Man, but he's too dim — seems to think that Raymond Keynes (sic) was a monetarist.

Modern synthetic soul has captivated one-time squatter structuralist Green Gartside on Scritti Politti's **Cupid & Psyche '85** (Virgin). When overnight this scrupulously alternative brown-rice type became a chic and athletic dandy subverting the premises of pop glamour, I blanched at the antiseptic aridity of it all. It was a bit like Boy George in dialogue with the Barthes of *A Lover's Discourse*. But in among the bubbly, plucked synths of this album is a very rare jewel called 'A Little Knowledge', a love duet so delicately sensuous that the two sexes melt into each other like a Canova sculpture — computerised Cupid and Psyche, and quite delicious.

As beautiful a crystallisation of love's longing is Prefab Sprout's 'Desire As' on **Steve McQueen** (Kitchenware). Sad to say that Paddy McAloon is not often as chillingly precise, for his brittle and intricate structures are too smooth, dry and distant.

Original glamour-puss Bryan Ferry has eliminated all traces of his early Roxy camp and settled for elegant elder statesman status. Black soul on **Boys and Girls** (Polydor) is cut and refined into iced cocaine: numb meditations on loneliness encased in slick, passive funk. Ferry is a weary *roué* peering down on the sport of boys and gals, not golden lads and lasses but ghostly youths in tuxedos and ballgowns. All the Japans who raided his wardrobe have only made him the more depressingly debonair. 'Let's be cool about it,' he sighs. No affirmation here.

There is another dismal album by the Talking Heads, called **Little Creatures** (EMI). David Byrne strains for the amiably pared-down neuroses of their first two albums and produces a set of nursery rhymes for pseudo-intellectuals. I cringe at the hollow self-parody of it all. A much more honest and happy album of American pop is **Katrina & the Waves** (Capitol), featuring the joyful summer hop of 'Walking on Sunshine'.

R.E.M.'s twisted folk-rock strummings are

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already sounding monotonous on **Fables of the Reconstruction/Reconstruction of the Fables** (IRS). These Appalachian Undertones don't benefit from Joe Boyd's bulky production and Michael Stipe's singing is more cryptically mumbled than ever. I shall give it time, however, since their records tend to be slow growers.

The release of a new Bob Dylan album is never an enthralling prospect, and **Empire Burlesque** (CBS) is painfully boring, a collection of mannered and mean-spirited love songs destitute of musical or lyrical ideas, sung in a voice that has become tiresome and undignified.

Dylan's current nadir is pointed up by a version of his 'Wanted Man' on **The First Born is Dead** (Mute), a new album by ex-Birthday Party singer Nick Cave. The song suits Cave's rootless, myth-fixated persona perfectly, galloping to a frenzied climax that even Dylan rather appreciated.

Cave's value is his extremism — the idea of him as this ravaged, death-besotted outlaw becomes compellingly absurd. He is a gothic urban hillbilly obsessed with the American Deep South (swamps, religion, Elvis Presley) and he sings a sick white-black blues of wheezing harmonica and gnarled slide guitars. It is a theatrical music, a music of intemperate gesture and far-fetched allegory, but it works simply on the charge of its despair.

Release of the month for me is a K-Tel compilation of hits by T-Rex, **Best of the 20th Century Boy**. Marc Bolan was my teenybop idol and the cause of my awakening to the illicit powers of camp, and it affords a sweet pleasure to find that his great moments — 'Jeepster' and 'Metal Guru' and 'Get It On' — haven't dated. 'Well, she ain't no witch and I love the way she twitch, uh huh huh!' Ah, 'whatever happened to the teenage dream?' as he warbled in '74. □

THEATRE

In a rough, tough world

Benedict Nightingale

Amid the Standing Corn
JANE THORNTON *Soho Poly*
The Woolgatherer
WILLIAM MASTROSIMONE
Lyric Studio, Hammersmith
Figaro
MOZART *Ambassadors*

WAS THE MINERS' strike an unequivocal disaster? Not according to Jane Thornton's **Amid the Standing Corn**, which involves the emergence of a women's support group in grimmest Yorkshire and, more particularly, the political education of a conservatively-inclined housewife. May, as she's called, begins by believing her holiday in Spain is considerably more important than solidarity with those likely to lose their jobs. The problems of pits other than her husband's aren't her business, picketing is not her business, nothing is her business except the well-being of herself and her family; and it's a long, long time before she questions her self-imposed isolation. But question it she eventually does, for reasons not altogether to do with group pressure, and ends proclaiming her conversion at a big rally in London: she's lost much, 'but I've gained a whole lot more — we shall not be defeated, not now, not ever again.'

But of course she and her sisters were defeated, in one way. Some may think Thornton should have admitted it, and indeed looked more critically at the strike itself. Her play may well irritate those who wonder whether its leadership was as wise as it was charismatic, and suspect that key errors were made both in its inception and during its course. But that's an argument scarcely likely to be neglected in the coming months, on the Left generally or in its theatres more specifically. Thornton's interest in the subject is rather different. Her point is that there are women, plenty of them, who were taught by that scathing year to look a lot further than the oven, the supermarket trolley and bright brochures from Thompson Holidays; and they won't forget the lesson, not now, not ever again. To her, that's hardly defeat. She could be right.

I've seen the play dismissed as 'agitprop', which these days seems to mean that a dramatist has wilfully transformed himself or herself into the coarsest of political propagandists, happy to distort or suppress any evidence that doesn't obviously support a moronically simple case. But that's not at all what we've come to expect of the Joint Stock Company, members of which director Carole Hayman and her four busy and versatile actresses are, nor what it delivers this time. *Corn* persistently resists opportunities either to romanticise or to condemn. Indeed, some feminists may actually find it objectionable, given its tendency to show support-group meetings as jabbering hen-parties, given its amused tolerance of husbands who say things like 'women, they couldn't organise bloody chaos' or insist on reading the racing pages while doing the hoovering. Thornton even manages a word or two of sympathy for the police, who'd themselves be in the dole queues if they refused to strike-break. Her play may not be as sophisticated as Caryl Churchill's *Fen*, or as complex as Stephen Wakelam's *Deadlines*, or as stimulating as several other pieces Joint Stock have offered us in its time; but it presents an honest and interesting picture of a highly traditionalist community in constructive crisis.

The Woolgatherer is an earlier play by the American author of *Extremities*, which showed the relationship between the sexes going about as wrong as it could. Indeed, I seem to remember a would-be rapist being blinded with wasp-spray, trussed up, flung into the fireplace and doused with boiling water, then kerosene. This time, the male scavenger presents a somewhat more acceptable face, and the divisions between him and his quarry are less drastic. It's she who has taken the initiative, spotting a likely-looking trucker at her counter in the five-and-dime store and inviting him up to her shabby little apartment. There, she proceeds to resist his tentative advances, he to accept her nervous qualms with reasonably good grace. She launches into a long monologue, describing the day she saw hooligans stone to death what to her are the symbols of everything beautiful and virginal, some flamingoes at the zoo. He turns confessional too, talking of the miseries and frustrations of his trucking life — 'it's a rough, tough world out there'. And so to the end of a not altogether plausible first act.

The business of the second is apparent enough, however. He has to be won from his cynicism and hardness, she from pathological craving for purity. As the author would appear to see it, she must accept his sexuality as well as her own, brutish though it may sometimes seem and even be. I must say, I winced more than Mastrosimone at the moment when the trucker slugs the shopgirl in the face, having decided she's harbouring a lover in the closet where, if you'll believe it, she has taken eccentric revenge for those flamingoes by secreting the pullovers she's begged and borrowed from the men she's lured to her eyrie. But the real problem may be that you won't get so far as believing either that or anything much else in what turns out to be a vigorously written but profoundly sentimental play. Terry Johnson's production doesn't altogether help, since George Irving and (especially) Kate Lock have seemingly been little nearer sleazy-bleak Philadelphia than Chiswick or Kew; but they could have ten times more street cred and still leave us boggling and reeling at Mastrosimone's denouement, where all turns to catharsis, to yielding and to the promise of love.

Speaking for myself, I boggled and reeled a bit at **Figaro**, too. It seemed a good idea, an economy-pack version of Mozart in the philistine heart of the West End. But records have spoiled even those of us who can't afford Covent Garden. Never mind the cuts, which are irksome enough; never mind the uneven performances; the trouble is the singing. Maybe they should hand out tin ears with the programmes and chocolates. □

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MUSIC

Clash of egos

Andrew Clements

Concertgebouw Orchestra
Barbican
West Side Story
BERNSTEIN *Deutsche Grammophon*

YOU MAY LOATHE everything he does in the concert hall, but no one surely can deny that Leonard Bernstein is one of the few larger-than-life conductors still practising their art today. He appears in London only rarely, and most of his recordings seem to emphasise the more flamboyant and self-indulgent aspects of his work, but nothing he conducts is without interest, nothing is without point or purpose.

Flamboyance and self-indulgence are certainly there as important parts of his make-up: a Bernstein who kept himself on a tight rein would be much less exciting, for his music-making relies upon the head-to-head clash of one ego against another, of one composer coming to terms with another's music. Nowhere does this generate more of an explosive charge than in the symphonies of Mahler, and it was the happiest of circumstances which brought Bernstein to the Barbican with the Amsterdam **Concertgebouw** to end the first phase of the Mahler, Vienna and the 20th Century Festival with the Ninth Symphony.

I must admit to having had some apprehension before the concert, a worry that the emotional swathes which Bernstein cuts through Mahler would disastrously disfigure much of his greatest music and that the purity of the composer's late style would somehow be compromised. What we heard was not the Mahler 9 of one's dreams, certainly not a performance to be heard more than once, but at the same time a quite overwhelming experience. In the Ninth, Mahler arguably achieves a new kind of objectivity, and manages to distance himself just a little from the obsessions which drive his earlier symphonies, a poise reflected in his return to a relatively straightforward four-movement form even if the two outer movements are both immensely slow.

Bernstein turned that kind of thinking on its head, producing a view of the Ninth as sibling to Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique*, to which its lay-out bears more than a passing resemblance. Instead of the chamber-like sonorities which are supposed to be a feature of late Mahler we were given incisive, highly characterised solo playing, whose very pungency left no doubt of its fundamentally tragic message.

Such blatant reshaping could so easily have collapsed under the weight of its own rhetoric, after the first noisy climax, into monstrosity. At least one critic thought it did just that. But for me the conviction and the dramatic certainty of every detail rode over any hint of such a disaster; everything seemed to be part of a gigantic piece of theatre, the elements blocked in with consummate skill and in which the end was never in doubt. The way in which Bernstein began the first movement, haltingly, with scraps of themes only gradually assembled, was to be matched 90 minutes later with the most drawn out treatment of the closing pages one could imagine; between those two poles of inarticulate doubt and resigned acceptance a vast range of experience was charted, encompassing climaxes of huge tonal power. The central pair of character pieces was equally unpredictable — the scherzo relatively suave and undemonic, the Rondo-Burleske nightmarishly vivid — sustained by the unfailingly brilliant playing of the Concertgebouw.

For if Bernstein was one hero of the concert, the orchestra was surely another, with woodwind and brass sections of enormous resource and resilience, and a string section that may not be as opulent as its rivals from Berlin and Vienna but which is more subtly expressive than either. Anyone lucky enough to have got a ticket is unlikely to forget the whole experience very quickly.

BERNSTEIN'S reputation seems likely to rest eventually not on his achievement as a conductor, nor even on his considerable output as a symphonic composer, but on his one venture into the world of the Broadway musical.

West Side Story is not quite a straightforward musical; it expects vocal range of opera-house dimensions from its singers and classical training from its dancers. It builds upon the strengths of both traditions to produce a work that for sheer melodic inventiveness has not been equalled by any of the 'operatic musicals' (*Gypsy, Company, Pacific Overtures, Sweeny Todd*) which followed in its wake.

Until he made the new recording Bernstein had apparently never conducted the full score. He makes of it something vivid and involving, with an orchestra of session musicians which sounds as though it was hand-picked. All the smaller roles are taken with great effectiveness; comic set pieces like 'America' and 'Officer Krupke' go with tremendous verve and timing. The speaking roles of Maria and Tony, taken by two of Bernstein's own children, are carefully integrated into the aural scheme; the whole feel of the production seems just right.

Yet the idea of using opera singers for the principal parts proves to be a serious miscalculation. Had a Spanish-speaking singer (José Carreras) not been chosen for the main white-American part of Tony credibility might not have been stretched quite so far; after some genuine sounding New York accents for the Jets' first number their leader arrives sounding as though he has deserted from the Puerto Ricans and, well though he sings the big numbers, the problem does not go away. Kiri te Kanawa is rather better as Maria, even if her singing is sometimes too carefully phrased; she makes at least some attempt at a Puerto Rican twang. The only operatic success is the increasingly versatile Tatiana Troyanos, a marvellously coarse-grained Anita; significantly she began her career singing on Broadway, so like Bernstein did not have to make any self-conscious transition between the two disciplines. □

Going private

Basil Ransome-Davies

IT'S EASY to get a vasectomy. You just pay, no questions asked. Of course I could join a national health waiting list, explained the GP. In about two years I would be there. On the other hand, he happened to know a colleague who did spot vasectomies for cash.

He stared at me as though he were calculating how many children I could father in two years. There he was, Al Capone, or at any rate Arthur Daley, making me an irresistible offer to become a punter in a medical market economy. I don't know if I could be sued if I were to label it a black-market economy, but it doesn't matter because I was there, I signed up, I paid and I'm perfectly satisfied with the result.

So this is only partly a tale of stupidity and failure. And those lay in my nervousness and hesitation before the deal was clinched.

Can any fear as widespread as the dread of surgery ever be classed as a phobia? Just to contemplate the surgeon's apparatus, its array of slicing and puncturing instruments, brings on nausea. It makes up a counter-pornography in which the softness of human flesh is not exciting but a painful flaw.

Still, up to then I'd had one operation in my life, an appendectomy at eight which passed like a dream and which I remember only because a lumpy scar like knotted pastry runs down my belly. I'd never undergone a seriously bad medical experience. Why was I getting myself so intimidated?

The answer was that I had no reason in the world except a conventional, learned, insincere and automatic hostility to any alterations to my body, perhaps even to my body itself, and an equally conventional left-cynical distrust of bourgeois 'experts'. Actually I was going in for not much more than a haircut and shoeshine. There would be no slavering ape awaiting me with a bloodstained razor, nor would I die of cancerous invasions within six months.

But it's no use telling fears to go away; you have to make them go away. Ernest Hemingway, for whom every living moment seems to have resembled a vasectomy performed without anaesthetics, celebrated alcohol as the 'giant-killer'. While I don't admire Hemingway's version of masculine heroism, he wasn't always wrong.

I drank, I should guess, about 30 centilitres of duty-free Pernod before taking off for the clinic. If it did turn out to be a gorilla I'd die smiling, my throat severed and milky, aniseed fluid pouring from my neck. If not, I'd feel cheerful for two hours whatever happened.

Getting stoned was a sensible peace-of-mind tactic, like holiday insurance, but it wasn't necessary. Though without the knowledge and the right materials all tasks are difficult I almost believe that most guys could learn to do vasectomies, their own included. Not that I

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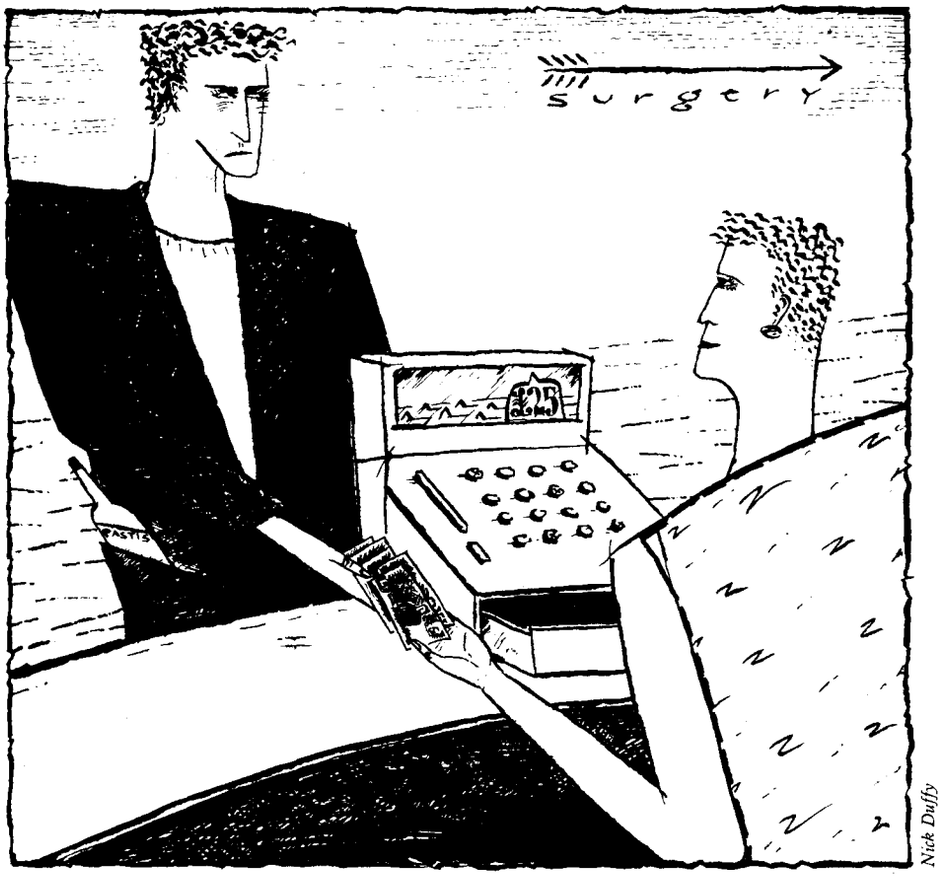

Nick Duffy

recommend trying. If you have the money (it cost me £25, four years ago) and want the op, why block up the health queue of the poor?

The surgeon talked me through it in a manner I recognised as professional-to-professional — rather than instant replay — but I had regressed practically to childhood and scarcely listened. My organ was playing its solo part on a spotlit stage while I watched from the best seat in the house. Two pricks admiring one another, it crossed my mind.

However the chief effect, I found, was that the starring role of my genitals had got me feeling horny. I asked the obvious question.

'You probably won't feel like it for a while,' he said.

'OK, but supposing I do?'

'I don't imagine you'll feel up to it.'

I was feeling more up to it by the second.

'Look, you only have to tell me if I'm going to tear out the stitches, whatever.'

'Soluble stitches. You'll find that they'll go of their own accord.'

What was this? Had I blundered against some secret taboo or was he bored with standard enquiries about the resumption of sex? If he didn't want to talk about it he could always have a little card printed.

I tried getting out the money, making it rustle as if I were scraping a dish to lure the cat in, but he offhandedly told me to pay the receptionist. She grinned with love at the sight of the fivers, saying in a friendly, complicit tone, 'This is the best bit.'

For me it was all the same. Ten minutes of painless and instructive attention, two tiny kebabs deposited in a stainless steel bowl, five blue bills at the door on the way out. And what had happened to the male myths, the scare stories spread informally and in the press, the snickering defensive humour? Down the drain with my kebabs.

Because my choice, as well as freeing myself, had been a politely agreed gesture with my lady, she bought us lunch at the local tandoori joint. Dazed by *pastis* and pleasurable relief, I swamped my bowels with curry, *naan* and lager, talking lightheadedly like a man who has been reliving his youth on a roller-coaster.

Of course I may have been exceptionally lucky, and I know in a minority of cases it's no joke, but it's never the worst trip. All most men have to endure afterwards is a couple of days' feeling as though they have been kicked in the balls, not extremely hard, or have carelessly walked into a table edge.

It's common for curry to fire the appetite and when we went to bed that afternoon I found that my desensitised groin had liberated the rest of my body. Future security apart, my altered map of physical responses made me feel more strongly, and more personally, than ever the poisonous absurdity of gender norms and of phallic prophets like Lawrence and Mailer. The phallus as the root of male being? Cut it out. □

Among this week's contributors:

Mervyn Jones's latest novel is *Joanna's Luck* (Piatkus).

Stephen Brook's *Honkytonk Gelato: Travels through Texas* was published by Hamish Hamilton earlier this month.

Nicholas Jacobs is the co-author of *Bertolt Brecht in Britain.*

TELEVISION

Hugo Williams
Crooks' tour

THE INSPIRATION for Antony Sher's Richard III at the RSC came from looking at a mountain in South Africa, he told **Saturday Review** (BBC-2). 'Towards the end of our holiday I did a drawing of the mountain and I thought Richard should look like that.'

We saw the drawing and it looked like a copy of one of Beardsley's foetal dwarves. Sher's paintings of his own face were presented as further evidence of the originality of his performance. Depth had been added by his reading on assorted psychopaths — Hitler, Sutliffe and Kray. From his researches, Sher had come to the conclusion that Richard should leap around on crutches, annoying and upstaging everyone in sight. These crutches, made from seasoned beechwood we were assured, are an original addition to the king's wardrobe, but the rest of Sher's portrayal, the built-up costume and hunch, the spindly trailing legs and darting looks, are borrowed from a definitive earlier performance by somebody else. Why not say so?

Gavin Millar, now a director, but appearing on the show in his old role of critic to praise Alan Parker's *Birdy*, let fly the thought that 'Nowadays you don't make jokes about Pakistanis and people with coloured skin' as if it were received wisdom on the matter. He should (he shouldn't) tune to **The Comedians** (ITV). Apart from the ones about 'Jaymans' who cast square-headed shadows on you when you're sunbathing at 'Terriblemolinos' (said twice) and the one about the man who took pills to make him less intelligent, becoming first an idiot, then an ape, finally an Irishman, *The Comedians* can offer no end of jolly japes about poofs and Pakistanis who do things like buy 500 yards of stair carpet when they are given a top flat in a ghetto tower block. I suppose it's all right because it is 'working-class humour' and the working class — as far as ITV is concerned — are a special backward group who have to be humoured because they are such good commercial fodder. 'Humoured' hardly seems the right word in this case. Come on, chaps, where are all those amusing football hooligan anecdotes?

Remember the short sharp shock? Housemaster Willie Whitelaw's end-of-term ramble about the increase in soccer violence in 1979? 'Life will be conducted at a brisk tempo . . .' etc? **Panorama** (BBC-1) found a more enlightened housemaster in charge at New Hall Detention Centre in York — carnation, hanky, trilby, cheery word — who allowed the team to hang about unhindered and to buttonhole detainees at will.

'You may find, like us, that the short sharp shock isn't quite what you expected', presenter Philip Tibenham told us. It might as well have been the governor talking to the inmates. Most of them were trying hard to suppress their glee at having something to do at last. The principal shock seems to be that of arrival, when they have to learn to say 'sir' to people. 'You finish

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with the word "Sir" here,' said one screw. 'Stick it after everything,' said another informally. Drill sessions, a major part of the Whitelaw PR job, have had to be cut down because the boys were enjoying them too much. 'You're obviously trying very hard,' said a kindly Sgt to some boys lifting their knees too high on the parade ground, 'You're obviously trying *too* hard.'

The gruelling gym sessions — 'producing a fitter class of criminal' — were also appreciated, so they too had to be reduced to bi-weekly work-outs. What don't they like? Dull repetitive work, like the rest of us, although there isn't much of that to get you down at New Hall. Farm work is a privilege, but everyone attended the lessons on babycare given by a visiting nurse and one drug pusher seemed completely carried away in his careful washing of the doll's eyes and hair. 'You should be able to position baby across your knees without his head hanging over,' the nurse told him. 'We'll have to have a programme on contraception one of these days.' The same group were questioned by Tibenham about football rioting. None of them considered it a crime, even when one of them described how seven of his mates had beaten up one visiting supporter. 'It's like an organised boxing match, innit?' seemed to sum up their approach. Shoplifting and robbing rich houses were likewise 'fair game'. Asked what sort of shock *would* stop them re-offending when they got out, one replied: 'Nothing. A job. If I had a job with proper money.' That about said it all really, but 37 per cent of them have a reading age of ten. What can they do? The incredibly kind and pukka governor of New Hall does his best to boost the confidence of these lowest of achievers — 'That was a good parade, lads. Very well done' — but *Panorama* saw it differently. 'For political reasons the public were allowed to think the short sharp shock was going to be tough. But with a failure rate of 68 per cent, the shock, many will argue, has got to be tougher.'

Nick Ross and Sue Cook of the BBC's *Breakfast Time*, all appropriately frowning now and looking far more than 12 hours older than when we last saw them over coffee, introduce **Crimewatch** (BBC-1), the most violent programme on television. What they do is re-stage crimes, complete with graphic beatings and car chases, in the hope that the sight of someone being bludgeoned or a car being rammed by a Securicor van will nudge some citizen's memory of an otherwise unremarkable day. After all, perhaps they had other things on their mind as that body fell from a window. At any rate, I enjoyed last week's car chase and according to the update an hour later some (unspecified) results were forthcoming. The programme's older, milder relative, **Police Five** (ITV), is equally effective at tracing 'six gross of dungarees without belts or buttons' etc, but tips like drilling a spy-hole in the boot of your car to keep tabs on the delivery of wage-packets may be more of a help than a hindrance to apprentice villains.

Crimewatch ended with a word of warning: 'If a man calls at your house saying he is a health visitor and asks to give you a medical examination, call the police.' This seemed like sound advice. I was getting tired of all those impromptu midnight visits, however well-intentioned. □

Naseem Khan
Getting STUC in

THIS column supports pioneers, which is why it went along to the European Parliament Building, a discreet Georgian house at the back of St James's Park, recently. For it was there that Alex Clark was to be unveiled, newly appointed Arts Officer to the Scottish Trades Union Congress — 'the first time,' said the press release, with an excusable overkill that we will come to later, 'that the Trade Union Movement in Britain has made such an appointment.' What was Mr Clark about? What were his chances of success? And can England (not for the first time) look to Scotland for a bit of vision and common sense?

The trouble with pioneering posts is that their terms of reference tend to be optimistic but vague. Clark's have at least an air of precision, but the scale of the job is clearly too great for one person. He is to research arts practice in the unions in Scotland, to help develop it, liaise between the unions and arts bodies at local and Scottish level, assisting and encouraging the involvement of trades unionists in all matters of arts and culture in the localities, make contacts on arts matters with European trades unions. About the only thing he is not, interestingly, empowered to do is to promote anything directly.

Clark, it must be said, was not reeling under the burden of these expectations. In fact he was smiling broadly both in London and later in his home territory, Glasgow. A dapper, loquacious, grey-haired Scot, ex-miner and then, for 15 years, Equity's rep. in Scotland, he gives every indication of having a whale of a time. The appointment has, he said, been greeted with a speedy response. He's been inundated with requests for union contacts from artists and been quickly drawn into 'vigorous discussions' with local authorities and trades councils. 'I see the job very much as bridge-building, initiating things, getting the unions involved in things already happening.' In fact, so busy has he been, he admitted, that the stage was fast approaching when he would have to take a long hard look at the field and determine new priorities. Otherwise there was a real danger of being swamped in case studies.

Obviously he is right in his instinct that a framework for action is needed if there is to be progress. It is just such a framework that has been lacking in union thinking about the arts. The last concerted TUC contribution, the *TUC Working Party Report on the Arts*, is ten years' old next year, with precious few offspring standing by its side. Here and there are shining examples of good practice. One-off festivals, ad hoc links between unions and arts groups (promotion of touring theatre, commissioning banners etc), direct promotions (like the TUC's annual Bread and Roses). But these tend to be the result of the enthusiasm of one key person keen on the arts. The job of a national union arts officer needs to go further and to build in institutional provision for the arts. It is possible that Clark has the clout to do that, compared with the only other precedent.

For his is, in fact, not the very first arts appointment made by the trade union movement. With an ironical bit of timing, the other ends next week. In 1982 Rick Gwilt was employed by the Lancashire Association of Trades Councils; his brief ran true to optimistic form — to develop the arts among trade unions in Lancashire. Funding — as with Clark's post — came for three years from the Gulbenkian Foundation and the major local arts body (in this case North West Arts). There will be no renewal of the post when funding runs out.

This does not mean that LATC's experiment was a failure. Like Clark, Gwilt — who passed the job on to Michael Buckley earlier this year — was inundated. Like Clark he effectively made his own (and rather different) working brief. Gwilt's choice was to organise directly. He organised tours, brought in music groups, generated exhibitions, saw that disputes were documented, served as catalyst for widely popular May Day festivals in Burnley and Preston, published writings by trade unionists and — a notably imaginative move — set up placements for theatre students with Blackburn trades council. There are innumerable ways, said Gwilt, in which the arts and artists can be harnessed creatively to trade union campaigns and concerns and used to reach not only the activists (a lesser target, in his view) but the underneath stratum of non-activists that Mrs Thatcher wrongly assumes to be her own.

Lancashire as a whole was clearly impossible. From the very beginning Gwilt declared his intention to concentrate on, at the very most, three towns. But even with that deliberate self-restriction, the possibilities were too wide and the back-up too slight. What Gwilt needed to consolidate his action-based approach was a mobile community arts team or — that magic word — 'animateurs'. But even more basic, he needed secretarial back-up: someone to take messages, write letters. 'Wishful thinking played possibly too large a role and awareness of structural realities not a large enough part,' he commented drily.

There is, however, little question of Clark's appointment falling into this trap. With an office and the structure of the STUC to hand, he is in a favoured position. The level of the appointment is significantly different too. Gwilt's decision to work at a grass-roots level suited not only him but also the circumstances. For, while Clark has access to the unions at a national level as well as to the STUC, Gwilt had no such lines of operation.

There is, of course, room for both functions — for a 'Clark' and a 'Gwilt': for a policy worker and a development worker, an Engand as well as Scotland. Everybody who admired the TUC's generous but outdated consultative document would want to see the TUC recover its old voice for the arts and its will to develop a socialist policy. With a bit of luck, fresh winds from the north might rattle a few windows down south. □

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Weekend competition

No 2878 Set by Maude Gracechurch
Wanted, a learned footnote to any well known line of poetry which offers a new and surprising interpretation of the line (which should be quoted). Max. five attempts per entrant by 3 July.

No 2875 Set by E.O Parrott
Misleading information for *British* tourists travelling *abroad*.

Report By Di Dact
I turn my back for a moment (thank you, yes, a most interesting time) to find you wallowing in xenophobia, jokes about lavatories and women's bottoms and absolutely *deplorable* taste on the subject of football supporters. Can you not be trusted on your own for a *second*? I was tempted to fling the mailbag, lock, stock and barrel, in the Thames. Relenting, however, I've managed to extract a handful of not *entirely* awful entries — three, I grant, lavatorial; but several enchantingly loopy and idiosyncratic. (Jocelyn Selson — while far from offensive — appears to have entered some other competition altogether.)

A lay member from the Sisters of Mercy is stationed inside men's toilets in Switzerland with a saucerful of change for Brits who have run out of cash.
GEORGE MOOR

In France, on all roads marked with a yellow diamond, Renaults have priority.
WARWICK HILLMAN

Drop in at the beautiful city of Baghdad before travelling on to Tehran.
Drink the famous spa waters of the Ganges.
WILL BELLENGER

The traveller in the Middle East should make a point of going to the main entrance of any mosque to collect a free pair of locally made sandals.
Don't be surprised if the person behind you in a Bulgarian bus queue pokes your ankle with an umbrella. It may be a case of mistaken identity.
DAVID TOLEY

Hire one of the Sicilian Vespers and enjoy the sun and wind as you ride round this beautiful island.
R.J. PICKLES

Before leaving West Berlin, why not photograph the Eastern sector from atop the Berlin Wall? You could get some unforgettable shots.
RON RUBIN

When visiting the Parthenon, ask your guide to direct you to the memorial to Lord Elgin.
NAOMI MARKS

Don't forget to take all the family for a nice bedtime drink in old dockside Antwerp, where the coffee shops are all clearly marked and the friendly waitress sits in the window to welcome you.
YVONNE REED

Custodians in Italian churches will occasionally challenge the dress of lady visitors. The correct response is to remove the offending garment and to place it as an 'offering' before the nearest statue.
JOHN STANLEY

Claiming friendship with Tam Dalyell will make you the centre of the giddy social life of Port Stanley.
RONALD BERGAN

The only public convenience in Red Square may be easily identified by the long queue outside it.
HARVEY COX

In Athens, be sure to ask to be shown the famous Turkish Baths.
CATHERINE BENSON

In an attempt to stop tourists being deterred by rising prices the Rome authorities have left money for impecunious visitors in the Fontana di Trevi. Help yourself.

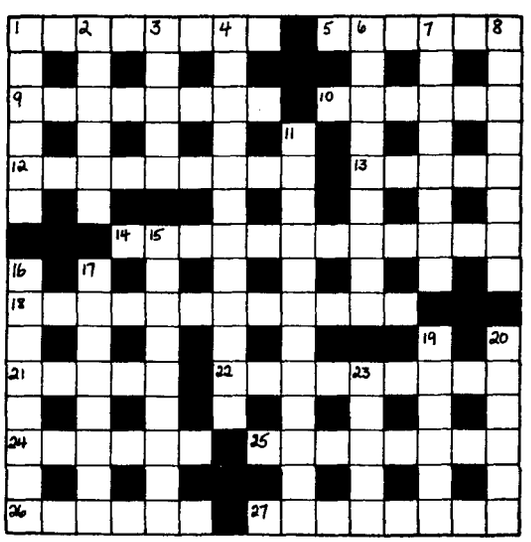
Unmarried couples who would call themselves Smith in Brighton are expected, according to Spanish tradition, to sign hotel registers in Spain as Mr and Mrs C. O. JONES.
R. D. CONDON

In Rome there's a fountain in which you throw coins; in Paris, a place where tourists 'spend a penny': go to the Arc de Triomphe and have a go at putting out the flame. No prizes, but great fun in true Rabelaisian style....
T. GRIFFITHS

French people find the English language easier to understand when it is spoken very loudly.
LISSA EVANS

Weekend Crossword 1483

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1483, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 9 July.



Name _____

Address _____

_____

_____

ACROSS

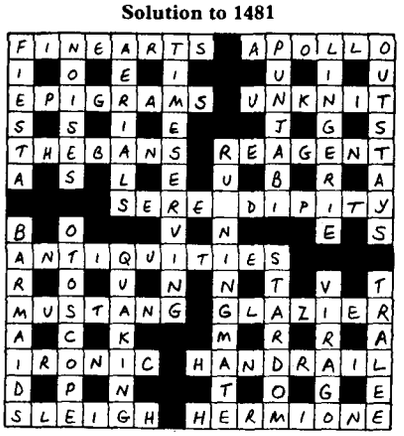
1. Pain which goes hard in to support a champion (8)
5. Bolted although finally unlocked (6)
9. Carriage which gives point to a sarcastic remark on time (8)
10. The office needs water after the polish has been put back (6)
12. Gentleman makes a vehicle go in France with a ring (9)
13. Animal about in the action (5)
14. Badly mar the flower although it is useful for burning weeds (12)
18. Where the plan is drawn up by the management after failure to win (12)
21. The force of points held by a writer (5)
22. Like Laurel and Hardy? (9)
24. Burn although coal suffers from loss of capital (6)
25. Prayed for the ruin of the bogus (8)
26. Beauty is its coin (6)
27. Ring madly and wait outside for the fish (8)

DOWN

1. Turn white although left in a place where one gets a tan (6)
2. It is unusual among broadcasters to have poor fare (6)
3. Horrify when a friend is without a penny (5)
4. Someone showing great affection is followed by a footpad secretly (12)
6. It is cleaner in the villa under Ernest's supervision (9)
7. Advance accounts which contain a footnote about the critique (8)
8. They have the game at heart but may send one to sleep (8)
11. If one goes into letters to the Prime Minister on a branch of medicine, there is delay (12)
15. Where a secret lie is put about (9)
16. A party with a strange point in the selection of a candidate (8)
17. Cradle which will do for the fish I catch (8)
19. Book which has its outside in the middle (6)
20. Running freely when not kept in the enclosure (6)
23. We hear a sound of anguish magnified (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1481



Prizewinners to 1481

J. Callan (N. Shields, Tyne & Wear)
W. Green (Herne Bay)
Mrs N. Yates (Cawsand, Cornwall)

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Closing date for return of completed forms: **19 July 1985**

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Application forms, together with job description, available from the Director of Personnel, 48 Albion Street, Glasgow G1 1LH (Tel. 041-227 5126) to be completed and returned by Friday 12 July 1985.

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Application forms and further particulars are available from the Senior Administrative Officer, Employment and Economic Development Department, Palatine Chambers, Pinstone Street, Sheffield, S1 2HN (0742 755215 ext. 212). The post of Director is a re-advertisement and previous applicants need not re-apply.

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LISTINGS

FRI 21 JUNE

CHRISTCHURCH (Bournemouth) 'The Case for 9 and a half million pensioners'. Spkr. Jack Jones. 7.30pm Regent Centre. **Christchurch CLP.**

LONDON 'Working in Science: being a Socialist and a Scientist in the 1980's'. Conf org. by BSSRS (British Society for Social Responsibility in Science) 7.30pm (tody. 10am Sat.) Mechanical Engineering, Imperial College, Exhibition Rd, SW7. Spkrs incl. David Albury, Lynda Birke, Charlie Owen. **Details: BSSRS 01-437 2728.**

SAT 22 JUNE

HARINGEY Haringey Brnch. of NALGO presents 'Striking for your benefit' Social eve. to celebrate the victory of Housing benefit campaign. 8pm Community and TU Centre, 2a Brabant Rd, Wood Green, N22. Tickets £2/£1 UB40 from Haringey NALGO Office 889 6106 or at door. Live music, disco, late bar, food, surprise guests.

LONDON Celebration of 10 Years Independence of Mozambique 8pm-3am Africa Centre, King St, WC2. Tickets £4/£3 UB40 (proceeds to rural water projects in Mozambique). Featuring: District 6 Art Hammer Jazz duo; Wiwa Dance Troupe, film spkr., exhibition late bar, disco. **Org. Mozambique Angola Cttee.**

WALTHAMSTOW Stop the Deportations: Shahid Syed must stay. March and Rally 2pm Walthamstow Town Hall. **Details: Shahid Syed Defence Campaign, C/O WFTURC, 26 St. James St, E17. 01-509 2243.**

LONDON Green Fair 10am-6pm (Social in eve.) Goldsmiths College, Students Union, Lewisham Way, SE14. Spkrs, Discn. grps., Workshops and food. **Details: Graham Bell 01-318 6628.**

SUN 23 JUNE

LONDON GREEN FAIR 1pm-6pm Fordham Park SE14. Entertainment stalls, games, live bands and food. **Access/Details: Graham Bell 01-318 6628.**

LONDON 'Say No to No Say for under 16s' — demo against The Gillick Ruling. Assemble 11am Lincolns Inn Fields. March to Jubilee Gdns for rally and entertainment. **Details: WRRIC 01-251 6332. Org. A Woman's Right to Choose Campaign 88A Islington High St, N1 8EG. 01-359 5200.**

MON 24 JUNE

LONDON LAG Grp. Meeting: 'Who will pay for the law centres?' 7pm Poly. of Central London, Red Lion Sq, WC1.

TUES 25 JUNE

LONDON 'The Future of the Electricity Supply Industry' 2-dy. discn. conf. Poly of South Bank. **Details: Ms. Chris. Richards Centre for Energy Studies, Poly. of S. Bank, Borough Rd, SE1. 01-928 8989 x. 2399.**

LONDON Meeting of Radical Health Visitors Grp. 7pm Old Coffee House pub, 49 Beak St, W1. Spkrs on alternative therapies from a woman's health centre. **RHVG C/O BSSRS, 9 Poland St, W1.**

WED 26 JUNE

LONDON 'Russia — myth and reality. Perceptions of the Cold War' 7.30pm Above 3 Horsehoes Pub, 28 Heath St, NW3. Spkrs. incl. Arkadi Maslenikov, London Correspondent of 'Pravda', Andrew Wilson, Associate Editor of The Observer. Adm. free. **Org. Hampstead CND.**

THURS 27 JUNE

LONDON 'Where is the women's movement moving?' Major discn. introduced by Tricia Davis, Communist Party Political Cttee. 8pm Chats Palace, Brooksby's Walk, London, E9. **Org. Leabridge CP.**

LONDON 'Private Care — Public Concern?' half-dy. study conf. to mark publication of report on private homes for elderly 1.15pm (buffet lunch £5) Polytechnic of N. London, Ladbroke Hs, Highbury Grove, N5. **Details: CESSA, Poly. of N. London 01-607 2789 x 5081/2.**

LONDON 'NIGHTMARE IN PARADISE' — tape/slide show about nuclearisation of the South Pacific. 8pm Brabant Rd. Trade Union Centre, Brabant Rd, N.22. **Org. Wood Green CND.**

BRIXTON 'Poverty & Social Security Reviews' by Margaret Becket MP, Alan Booth, author *Living on the Margin*. 7.30pm Brixton Recreation Centre. **Org. Marxism Today.**

FRI 28 JUNE

LONDON 2-day International Conf. on Paranormal Chemistry Dept., University College. **Details: Mike Hutchinson, CSICOP 9UK0 10 Crescent View, Loughton Essex IG11 4PZ.**

LONDON 'Tomorrow's Parents, Yesterday's Values' Conf. on teenage sexuality. Workshops, video. 9.45am-4.30pm Queen Mary College, Mile End Rd, E1. **Org. Nat. Cncl. for One Parent Families, 255 Kentish Town Rd, NW5 2LX. 01-267 1361.**

SAT 29 JUNE

LONDON Community Action against Racism meeting for parents, teachers, students with contributions from Drummond Parents Action Grp (Bradford & William Patten Infants Sch. (Hackney). 3-6pm Grays Inn Resource Centre, 1A Rosebery Ave, EC1. Creche (Tel. 278 7856 in advance). Disabled access. **Org. All London Teachers against Racism and Fascism, Panther Hs. Rm. 216, 38 Mount Pleasant, WC1X 0AP. 01-278 7856.**

LONDON 'People v. State' — Anti-Imperialist Weekend. 12-3pm Picket S. African Embassy, Trafalgar Sq. 12-2.30pm Rally, street theatre, music outside Wood Green Library, N22. 7-10pm Rally with David Kitson plus Liberation songs. Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, WC1. Adm. £1/50p UB40. **Details: Fight Racism/Fight Imperialism 01-837 1688.**

SUN 30 JUNE

LONDON Anti-Imperialist Day Sch. 10am-5.30pm Caxton Hs, 129 St. John's Way, N19. Workshops, discn. on political situation in Britain after miners' strike, films. Creche/food. Adm. £2.50/£1.50 UB40. **Details: Fight Racism/Fight Imperialism 01-837 1688.**

FORTHCOMING

1 JULY BIRMINGHAM Christians against the Cuts Public Meeting with Lord Soper, David Hallam, 7.30pm Moseley Rd Methodist Church. B13. **Org. Christian Socialist Movement 021-455 7544.**

1 JULY MOLESWORTH SE Region & London Region CND Day of Action & peace picnic. Meet 11.30am Cockbrook La. entrance. Bring food, drink, music, games. **Details: 0580 880805.**

3 JULY LONDON Ivan Illich will discuss The Side Effects of Compulsory Literacy 7pm St. Mark's Hall, Abercorn Pl. NW8. **Details: The Academic Inn 01-286 4366.**

3 JULY LONDON Public Enterprise Grp. AGM 7.30pm Friends Meeting Hs. 8 Hop Gardens (off St. Martins La.) WC2.

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

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MEETINGS

SHAW SOCIETY. Patricia Pugh on 'Shaw The Politician'. Friday 28 June at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. Coffee 6.30 p.m. Lecture 7 p.m.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Sunday 23 June 8 pm. 'ULT Day', United Lodge of Theosophists, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

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BUSY COMMUNITY Worker, male, single, 30, involved with peace, greens, anti-sexism seeks similar woman, seeking space to relax, and living in North East/North Yorks. Box (25)1032.

DATELINE'S PSYCHOLOGICALLY accurate introductions lead to pleasant friendships, spontaneous affairs and firm, lasting relationships including marriage. All ages, all areas. Free details: Dateline Computer Dating, Dept. (7NS), 23 Abingdon Rd, London W8. Tel. 01-938 1011.

EARTHWOMAN 34, tall, London. Likes: people, pubs, skies, smells, chieftans, Mozart, beards, twinkly eyes, Guinness, problem pages, books, pictures, plays, walking, warmth, wit, mischief, honesty, curiosity, thinking, listening, talking, laughing, looking, giving. You? Box (25)1026.

EPICUREAN OMNIVORE (academic, male 45), relocating London to Humberside, seeks stimulating female company (35-55), to maintain his optimism in life North of Watford — within 1 hour of Humberside. Box (25)1021.

GAY GUY, 32, attractive, sincere and interesting graduate. Interested in arts, politics & travel, seeks similar (over 21), for lasting relationship. Photo appreciated. Box (23)0972.

GENTLEMAN, 46, platonically tied, living Hampshire, seeks lady friend for discreet, sensuous meetings, morning or afternoons. Box (24)1013.

INTELLIGENT, SLIM schoolteacher, 31, branching out, seeks her knight in shining armour or nearest offer, to enjoy conversation, travel, theatre and partnership. Midlands/anywhere. Box (23)0970.

JOURNALIST FROM Canada, visiting UK in September. Slim, 5' 9", 36, cogent, excitable, compassionate male seeks empathetic female for Tate, RSC, Bertorelli's and Guardian breakfasts. Box (25)1022.

LONDON BACHELOR, 27, teacher with wide interests, seeks warm female for loving relationship. Box (24)1003.

LONDON MALE, 36, enjoys cinema, travel, fringe theatre, social life, drink. Community/social policy job. Arts graduate. Leftish but not active. Would like to meet unattached woman for friendship/relationship. Box (25)1054.

MALE, 39, gentle and reflective but lively sense of humour, becoming isolated by the combination of a professional life and single parenthood, seeks caring female companionship, 28-36. Interests veer from theatre, music, pubs and literature, to a love of the countryside. London or anywhere. Box (25)1038.

MALE GRADUATE, stranded in East Midlands/East Anglia, seeks female, unattached, 35-45ish, perferably slim and intelligent, to take him out of himself. Will answer all letters and return photos. Box (23)0948.

MALE, PROFESSIONAL, 30, leftish, humorous, hedonistic and solvent, seeks m/f. friends for conversation, pubs and general socialising, to overcome big-city boredom. N. London. Box (25)1024.

MALE STUDENT, 23, with wide range of interests, seeks lively/interesting socialist female, for close relationship. All replies answered. Box (23)0971.

MAN 40+, wishes a complete mutually emotional and physical loving affinity, with permanent ladyfriend. Wide interests: theatre, serious music etc. Phone No? Box (25)1023.

NORTH EAST: tall man, young 30, new to the area, needs company. Interests include: music, politics, walking and other forms of travel. Box (25)1019.

NW1: independent lady, where are cultured, nice men gone, 65-70? Box (25)1052.

PROFESSIONAL CHINESE widower, 50s, having wide mid-brow interests, wishes to meet unattached, attractive lady, age unimportant, for friendship and fun. Preferably London-based. Box (24)0994.

PROFESSIONAL FEMALE, mid 40s, trying not to turn into a cabbage, seeks male companionship to share the sights, sounds, activities, pleasures and laughter of Oxford. Box (25)1036.

PROFESSIONAL LADY, 30, very shy, gentle, nervous, seeks correspondence with similar male, for mutual support/care. Interests: walking, politics, CND, music, piano. N. Yorks. Box (24)1008.

PROFESSIONAL, SOCIALIST, 34, starting again, affectionate, kind, generous, seeks similar or younger female, to share interest in travel, classical music and the future. Birmingham/anywhere. Box (23)0956.

PROFESSIONAL, SOLVENT Taurean, leftist widower, retired, with wide interests, seeks female, slim, attractive, middle-class, informed and aware, for life & love. Box (25)1040.

SCORPIO MAN, 40s, unattached, NB with all typical Scorpio characteristics/tendencies, many interests, not conformist, seeks genuine, caring, loving, fun partnership, with compatible female, London. Box (25)1037.

SHY, ATTRACTIVE widow, 50, beautiful house and acres, seeks to meet kind-hearted gentleman, 54, with impeccable character and sixteen cats. Box (25)1025.

STUART (41) & Jessica (3) seek a book-loving, lively, non-smoking female friend, to make their lives more complete. Essex based. Single parents welcome. Box (25)1020.

SWAIN, 37, single, slightly shy, sanguine, smokeless, six-foot, salubrious socialist, seeks saucy, sincere seductress, for sociable Saturnalia. Surrey. Box (25)1031.

TALL, BEARDED man, 42, gentle, unpretentious, sense of humour, enjoys books, music, seeks warm, educated woman for caring relationship. Central London. Box (25)1030.

UNIVERSITY LECTURER, 30, PhD, Glasgow based, needs a lady soul mate, for relationship, friendship and marriage. Varied interests. Box (25)1042.

WANTED: GENTLEMAN early 60s, mature enough to accept affection and kindness from widow, who is n/s, slim, many interests, living West London. To share interests, outings & enhance each others lives. Box (25)1039.

WOMAN, 40, wishes to meet man to share her interests, arts, travel. NW London area. Box (25)1053.

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